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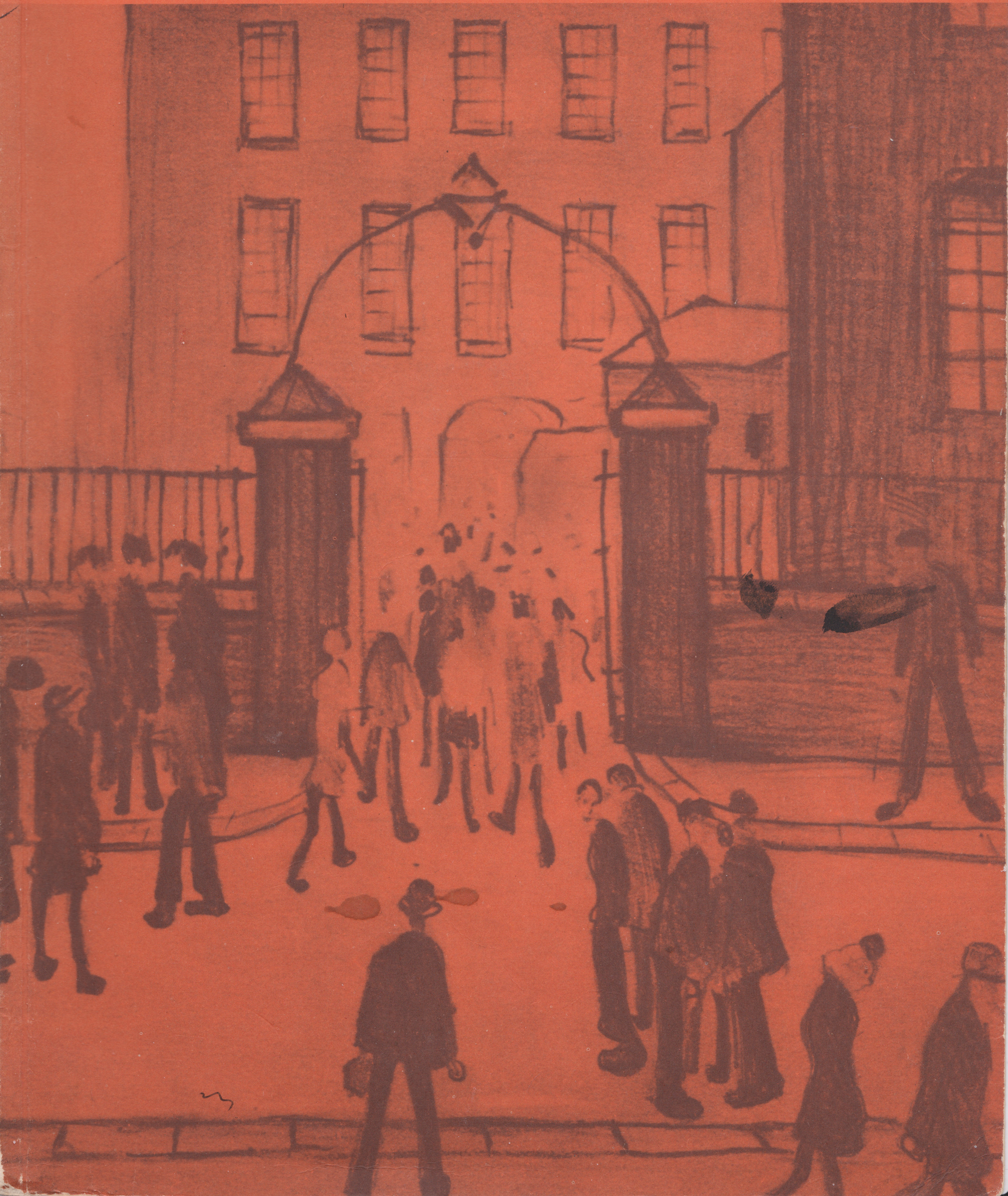
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Understanding Society: Social Science Foundation Course Units 1–5

Why People Live in Societies



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY: A FOUNDATION COURSE UNITS 1–5

Why People live in Societies

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

CONTENTS

UNIT 1 THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HUMAN NATURE
D. W. J. Corcoran **Page 11**

2 MEN AND GOVERNMENT
James Barber **Page 33**

3 THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF SOCIETY
F. S. Brooman **Page 59**

4 SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENTS
A. T. A. Learmonth **Page 87**

5 MAN AS A SOCIAL ANIMAL
Ruth Finnegan **Page 111**

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1.2

INTRODUCTION

In the first five weeks, we are dealing with the question, "Why do people live in society?" This is a fundamental one for a course concerned with people and societies and it immediately suggests other supplementary questions. Why are we in societies at all? Is it because we gain something from living in societies? Could we survive in any other way? Can society give us the things we want (or think we want)? Is there something essentially human about living in society?

The attempt to answer the main question, difficult though it is, introduces us to some of the characteristics of people and society as seen by social scientists. We become involved in discussion about the basic nature of man (or of people) and of society. We discover that there are many different approaches to the fundamental question, partly depending on the different views of man adopted by different disciplines, partly on the particular aspect of society stressed. We begin to realise something of the problems involved in trying to answer the questions and that the problems themselves throw light on the nature of people and societies. All in all, trying to answer this question leads us into some of the central concerns of the social sciences.

Before we become too involved in the question, we must first look at the words 'society' and 'societies'. These are words that we come across in everyday language, but which we use in different ways. When we talk about man as a social creature we sometimes imply the very general idea that man belongs to the whole society of mankind. But although man is a member of 'society' in this sense, we each belong to a whole range of particular 'societies'. Take, for example, a man who works in the Liverpool docks, and think of some of the societies to which he may be said to belong – 'British society', 'urban society', 'northern society', 'working-class society' and so on. The term 'society' is sometimes used in the sense of a social group: a smallish unit such as a group of prisoners, members of a club, or a street corner gang. It is how each of us fit into these societies that we shall examine in the course.

In this first block, each of the five disciplines which is represented in the course has a week in which it examines approaches to the questions which seem relevant to it. Therefore, in addition to a general introduction to social science, you will also have your first view of the separate disciplines, and you will find that each of the five approaches is quite distinct. But while the distinctiveness is apparent, so are some important unifying factors. We are, after all, approaching the same question, and while we may approach it from different directions we have come together in the end because in trying to find answers, we turn to the same basic material – man and society.

In addition, the aim has been to make the individual units complementary to each other. In Unit 1 the point is made that man is a social animal but as there are other animals which form societies, in what sense is man unique? The unit attempts to answer this question and it is man's uniqueness that enables him to develop characteristics which are examined in subsequent units. In Units 2 and 3, we pick out particular aspects of man – political man and economic man. These aspects are obviously of great importance but they are individual parts of man's social characteristics and so in the fourth and fifth units we start to bring together the interrelating aspects of social organisation. In this we are saying there is no such thing as economic man separate and apart from his other social aspects. Sociology in the fifth unit takes an overview and attempts to merge the various aspects together into man as one whole complex social being.

There is another difficulty about the question, "Why do men live in society?", for some scholars would argue that the question, never mind the answers, makes no sense. They would argue that it is impossible to examine reasons for living in society because no rational choice is involved. We are born into society; there is no question about 'why' we do it; it is part of our 'nature'. As the troops who served in the trenches of the First World War said: "We're here because we're here, because we're here, because we're here". This is a viewpoint that you will find recurring in the units.

At the end of your five weeks' work, you will have examined five approaches to the question, "Why do men live in society?" This will have helped to introduce you to the disciplines, but we hope it will also stimulate you to challenge and to discuss the issues which have been raised in the different approaches. It should also naturally lead to the next section which asks, "How do men live in society?"

In the correspondence and reading material for the first five weeks, comparatively little conscious effort is made to deal with the methods that social scientists use in their attempts to understand society, but the first five radio programmes have been devoted to a general introduction to the Social Sciences dealing with broad questions about how we set out to understand society. These radio programmes should help you not only with the first five units, but give a foundation for understanding the whole course.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS **(bound separately)**

Self-assessment tests
Computer marked assignments
Tutor marked assignments
Radio notes
Television notes
Notes on the correspondence material

THE SET BOOKS

Understanding Society,* Readings in the Social Sciences,
edited by the Social Sciences Foundation Course Team. London, The Open University Press/Macmillan (1970)

Government and Politics in the Twentieth Century
by G. M. Carter and J. H. Herz.

Society by E. Chinoy. New York, Random House

Introduction to Economic Analysis
by J. M. Fleming. London, Allen and Unwin (1969)

Introduction to Psychology
by E. R. Hilgard and L. Atkinson, 4th ed. New York, Harcourt, Brace and World (1967)

Introducing Sociology
by P. Worsley. London, Penguin Books (1970)

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* Referred to in the text as the *Reader*.

Unit 1

The Fundamentals of Human Nature

CONTENTS UNIT 1

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 10

1 INTRODUCTION 11
  1.1 Aims of the Unit 11
  1.2 What is Psychology about? 11

2 INSTINCTIVE AND LEARNED BEHAVIOUR 13
  2.1 Insect societies 13
  2.2 Men the 'programmed' organism 16
  2.3 A few neurological considerations 17

3 PROGRAMMING MAN TO LIVE IN SOCIETY 18
  3.1 The gregarious instinct 19
  3.2 Socialisation 19

4 BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DRIVES 20
  4.1 Exploration, curiosity and need for stimulation 22
  4.2 Society as a source of satisfaction of the basic drives 22
  4.3 The social drives 24
  4.4 Are social drives necessary? 24
  4.5 The genesis of social drives 25
  4.6 Learned drives 27

5 A FINAL WORD 28

APPENDIX 30

BIBLIOGRAPHY 32

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS UNIT 1

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources for material used in this unit:

N. TINBERGEN. *Study of Instinct.* Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1951.

S. P. R. ROSE, The Open University, Fig. 1.3.

ROBERT L. FANTZ. 'The Origin of Form Perception'. *Scientific American*, May 1961, p. 72, for Fig. 1.5.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HUMAN NATURE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the Unit

This correspondence unit has three broad purposes. Its main purpose is to consider the question common to all units in Block 1: Why does man live in a society? The other two purposes, to give the student some understanding of what Psychology is about and to dwell upon some aspects of the psychology of human nature, will, we hope, be fulfilled in the course of tackling the main question.

However, both in this unit and the ones that follow the question is principally a focus; it is not so important to learn what I as an individual psychologist think about man in society, as it is to grasp the methods and the ways in which psychologists go about tackling such a question.

It goes without saying that one cannot attempt to present a wide view of psychology within the limits set by an introductory unit and at the same time deal in depth with *any* topic. Where it is felt that a summary has been far from adequate the reader will be referred to a few selected references, which he may follow up if he has the inclination.

The very first job, however, must be to create the broad frame of reference, which we shall adopt in writing this unit. The rest of this introduction, therefore, sets out a few objects and assumptions which are made in the study of Psychology.

1.2 What is Psychology About?

The 'study of the soul' or 'mind', the literal translation of Psychology, is *not* an accurate description of the psychologist's work. Although there are psychologists, found mainly within the clinics, who consider that they are probing "within that territory of ourselves (where) there can be only our (own) footprints" (Laing, 1969) by far the greater majority are content with defining Psychology as *the study of the behaviour of living organisms*. No words can at this stage convince the reader (if he needs convincing) that there is no way "into the mind" other than by the observation of behaviour, so we shall not try. All we shall do is to present traditional psychological views which bear upon the central question. At the end the student may ask himself what the psychology we have taught in these pages has been about. He might also ask himself how probing the 'mind' or 'soul' might have been a different enterprise from that which we will be describing here. Most psychologists, however, feel that if the mind were to be probed effectively the sort of techniques we shall outline here would eventually be used. When it is said, therefore, that psychology is not about the soul or mind what is actually meant is that its *techniques* are not what one might imagine them to be if one were to examine the soul. *Understanding of mind comes from the explanation of behaviour*. It is hoped that the rudiments of this 'gospel' come through.

All scientific ventures are based upon the assumption that no 'outside agent' is at work upon the object of study. A physicist examining the properties of sub-atomic particles assumes that no 'hand' interferes with the behaviour of the electrons which he cannot in *principle* measure. This is not to say that he can in practice control all extraneous variables or that random influences are not at work, only that it is logically possible to do so, whereas it is not logically possible to influence, say, the hand of God.

If this were an introduction to any other natural science, it would not be necessary to spell out this first assumption, indeed most scientists never recognise that such an assumption is made, but we are concerned here with human behaviour which has been considered from the very beginning of human thought to be under some control, which one cannot reach other than by prayer or some other similar activity. So it is as well to state the assumption.

A second assumption is peculiar to psychology, but follows from the first. It is that human behaviour can in principle be examined by scientific methods. These come broadly under two categories, *observation* and *experiment*. By observation is meant the examination of behaviour under 'natural' circumstances, of children in a play group for example, of families, of animals, of immigrant groups. The experiment is in fact a method of observation under controlled circumstances. In a traditional experiment at least two situations are set up, one of which differs from the first by a single property. The difference in behaviour observed between the two situations is then assumed to be the result of the different condition, and a determining influence has been exposed.

A third assumption is that it is possible to discover 'laws' which 'govern' the behaviour of living organisms. The experiment is after all only a method for testing a hypothesis; that is, a provisional explanation, about how the underlying system works. The experiment can support or refute the hypothesis, and if it is supportive the hypothesis gains some credibility as a possible description of the manner in which the behaviour is controlled by an underlying mechanism.

The fourth, and for our purposes the last assumption, is that the laws which govern the behaviour of the lower animals may well apply in kind to man. Although the determinants of human behaviour are clearly more *complex* than those of the lower animals and although there are many more extraneous factors which influence human behaviour, yet it is assumed that the 'simple' laws which can be shown to predict the behaviour of the lower animals may play some rôle in human behaviour. This assumption has determined what sort of work a great many psychologists actually do; they experiment upon rats and other animals (an activity which has quite wrongly equated the experimental psychologist with the rat psychologist). This last assumption sprang from the influence of Darwin and subsequent formulations of the theory of evolution.[1] Not only was man identified as an animal, in this theory, but the enormously useful concept of *adaptation to the environment* was introduced, and eagerly grasped. In attempting to understand a particular behaviour pattern the psychologist will frequently adopt the biologist's rôle and ask in what manner the particular pattern of behaviour is adaptive, what biological purpose it has, how it aids in the survival of the individual, the species, or the society in which the animal is to be found.

Some forms of behaviour are of course obviously adaptive, chicks will scatter when the shadow of a hawk is passed overhead, a hand will be quickly withdrawn from a heated surface, but others are not so easily seen as adaptive. Why do moths circle the light source suicidally? Why do dogs sprinkle the lamp-post? Why do cats bury their faeces? All serve a purpose in the battle for survival, all can be answered from the standpoint of the Darwinian behaviourist. The important point is that human behaviour can also be viewed from this standpoint: In what way is human behaviour adapted to the environment? In what way does man in a society stand a better chance of survival than man alone?

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[1] Reader '*Understanding Society*' (1970) pp. 3–14.

However, the psychologist is likely to interpret the question why do men live in societies? in another way. He is likely to ask himself not why but *how* man comes to behave in the manner in which he does, and specifically *how* man becomes a socially orientated individual? In considering this latter question he is likely to conclude that *man may have no option other than to live in a society*. Let us see how well this conclusion stands up to scrutiny.

2 INSTINCTIVE AND LEARNED BEHAVIOUR

Before the reader pre-judges the answer we gave in the last section to the question of why men live in societies (by stating perhaps that he could, if he really wanted to, live in total isolation) let us consider a society of remarkable complexity, whose individuals are some of nature's simpler creatures. As we consider the behavioural mechanisms within the individual creatures it will become obvious that these animals at least have no option other than to live in society. Having established this point we can consider to what extent the human being is similarly 'programmed'[1] for living in human society. He may perhaps have as much option as they – which is none at all.

2.1 Insect Societies

As most readers will know the queen bee is the social focus of the hive. She lays the eggs, which develop into the larvae from which future generations of adult bees are formed. The male bee, the drone, has one function, that of fertilisation of the queen and after this is accomplished he is of no further use to the hive and may be rejected. The worker bees are the most interesting, because of the huge variety of tasks they perform in the hive. By their industry the hive is maintained as a social entity, and without them, bees would certainly not survive as a species.

We can ask of an insect society how it is adaptive, that is how it aids in the survival of the species? We can examine if we wish the 'sociology' of the insect society by discovering the organisation within the group in terms of specialist functions. A third area of study would be to examine the *individual insect* and try to discover how it comes to behave in what amounts to a socially responsible manner. The worker bee (as we have stated) really does work hard throughout its life tending the queen and larvae, foraging for food, even ventilating the hive by flapping its wings rapidly. Why does it behave in this fashion? It gets no special reward contingent upon the proper execution of its duties; it gets no pay. We would clearly conclude of the bee that it has no option other than to behave in the manner in which it does. We would call the behaviour 'instinctive' and leave it at that. Of course simply labelling the behaviour has not explained it and we must ask what instinctive behaviour actually means, and how we might describe behaviour which is not instinctive.

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[1] The word 'programmed' is used here in broadly the same sense as it is used in computer terminology. A computer works according to a sequence of instructions called a program which is fed into it with the data it has to process. A computer must do what its program tells it to, and there is much similarity between the concept of programming and the learning which the human being undergoes in the course of a lifetime.

There are no hard and fast rules for distinguishing instinctive behaviour, but the following broad principles apply in most cases.

1. *The behaviour tends to emerge in a mature form at birth.* The worker bee begins its work immediately it emerges from the larval stage. At this time a remarkable amount of information has already been stored genetically in its very primitive nervous system. Of its behavioural repertoire perhaps the most surprising is that it is capable of communicating to other bees where and in what quantity food is to be found. This is achieved by the famous 'bee dance' described first by Karl von Frisch. In fact there are two basic dances, one designed to indicate that there is a rich supply of food within 100 yards of the hive and the other, the more remarkable of the two, to indicate the location of food up to a mile from the hive. After the worker has come in and discharged its load of food, it begins a dance, if the supply has been exceedingly rich. This is usually performed on the honeycomb and while it is done other bees touch the dancer with their antennae to sample the quality of the food which has been found. The dance consists basically of a figure of eight like that shown in Figure 1.1 (a). As it dances the straight course it wags its tail. The rapidity of the wagging dance indicates *how far* away the food is to be found. One waggle dance pattern completed in a bit more than a second and a half indicates that the food is about 325 feet away. A waggle dance completed in two seconds indicates food at about 650 feet, whereas it takes almost five seconds to indicate that food is a mile distant. The *direction* of the food is communicated by the angle of the straight course relative to the vertical. Thus if the bee moves vertically upwards as in Figure 1.1 (a) the food is to be found in the direction of the sun. If the course is that shown in Figure 1.1 (b) in which the straight course is at an angle of 25° to the left, it means that the food is to be found 25° to the left of the sun.

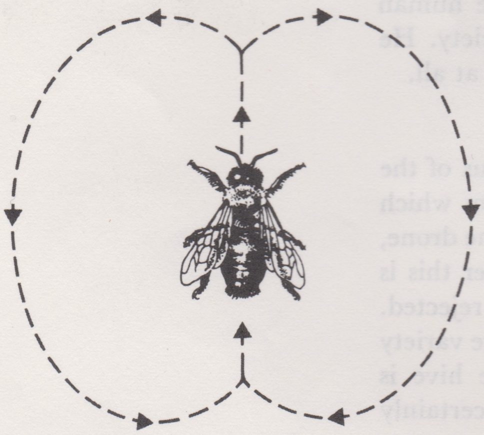

Figure 1.1 (a) The Bee dance. In this instance the food can be found in the direction of the sun.

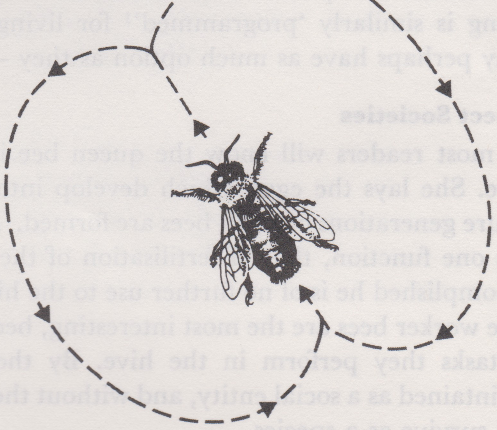

Figure 1.1 (b) With this variation of the dance the food can be found 25° to the left of the sun.

Now this behaviour is somehow 'wired into' the bee in the course of its development, and as far as one can tell it is wired in identically in each and every worker bee. Thus:

2. *The second principle of instinctive behaviour is that it is identical in all members of a given species.* If a domestic animal like a dog is brought up in a friendly atmosphere, it will wag its tail at strangers, let children pull its tail and so on. If, however, it has been reared in a cruel or deprived atmosphere it may well cringe or bite a stranger. Not so the highly instinctive ant. It doesn't matter too much where the ant's nest is situated, the ant will behave exactly like an ant wherever it is. Thus the nervous system of the dog is somehow built to enable the dog *to fit into whichever society it happens to have been born*, whereas that of the ant (probably because of its minute proportions) is limited to mediating behaviour of a highly stereotyped kind.

3. *A third characteristic of instinctive behaviour is that the sequence of actions performed depends upon the right stimulus being present at exactly the right time.* If it is not the behaviour is disrupted. Tinbergen (1951 p. 47) describes the behaviour of the bee-hunting digger wasp in the following manner:

> The hunting behaviour of the bee hunting digger wasp . . . gives us another example. . . . A hunting female of this species flies from flower to flower in search of a bee. In this phase she is entirely indifferent to the scent of bees; a concealed bee, or even a score of them put out of sight into an open tube so that the odour out of it is clearly discernible even for the human nose, fails to attract her attention. Any visual stimulus supplied by a moving object of approximately the right size, whether it be a small fly, a large bumble bee, or a honey bee, releases the first reaction. The wasp at once turns her head to the quarry and takes a position at about 10–15 cm to leeward of it, hovering in the air like a syrphid fly. Experiments with dummies show that from now on the wasp is very susceptible to bee scent. Dummies that do not have bee odour are at once abandoned, but those dummies that have the right scent release the second reaction of the chain. The second reaction is a flash-like leap to seize the bee. The third reaction, the actual delivery of the sting, cannot be released by these simple dummies and is dependent on new stimuli, probably of a tactile nature. . . .

Since there is little nervous tissue present in the insect it is necessary that it be used economically. Thus it has become 'wired-up' to deal only with the most probable set of circumstances. This economy in the use made of nervous tissue is evident far up the evolutionary scale. The stimuli which elicit certain reactions like that of the hunting wasp was, as we saw, highly specific. This is also the case with newly hatched turkeys. Figure 1.2 shows some bird models used in experiments by Tinbergen and Lorenz. These were passed above groups of feeding birds and the ones marked with a cross were the only ones which caused the birds to scatter.

It is clear that these built-in patterns of behaviour are adaptive within the normal environment and under the most *probable* set of circumstances which the animal might meet. But when circumstances are changed such that they become 'unusual' the instinctive animal fails to adapt to the changed environment. In T.V. Unit 1 can be seen some films of the ethologist Konrad Lorenz being followed everywhere by a gaggle of grey lag geese, as if he were their mother. In fact as far as the goslings were concerned he was exactly that. The newly hatched bird is 'wired up'[1] to follow the first moving

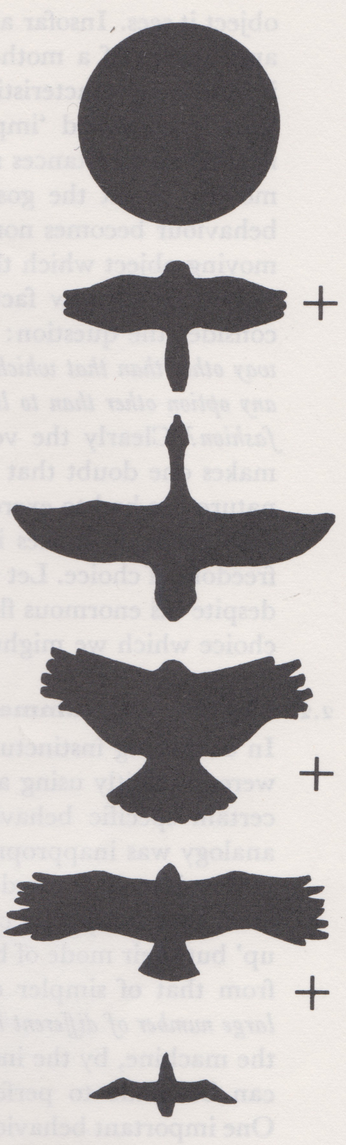

Figure 1.2 Models used for testing reactions to various birds of prey. Those marked + indicate released escape responses.

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[1] We have and shall use the words 'wired up' or 'wired into' at several places in this text. They are meant to draw an analogy between a nervous system in which definite and specific interconnections seem to exist and simple electrical devices. In both it would seem that the pattern of the 'wiring' determines absolutely the behaviour of the device (animal). This is not true in a strict sense, for example, in man.

object it sees. Insofar as the object need not have the exact stimulus appearance of a mother goose, the behaviour does not have truly instinctive characteristics: it is in fact best considered an 'instinct to learn' and called 'imprinting'. This behaviour is adaptive under normal circumstances since it is highly probable that the first large moving object the gosling sees will be the mother. However, the behaviour becomes non-adaptive when Lorenz himself was the first moving object which the goslings saw.

With these new facts about instinctive behaviour we may now consider the question: *do these creatures have the option to behave in any way other than that which they have been wired up to perform? Do bees have any option other than to live in a society and to perform in such an altruistic fashion?* Clearly the very lack of modifiability of their behaviour, makes one doubt that this can be so. The extreme economy which nature has had to exercise upon the limited nervous materials available probably makes it impossible to 'wire in' any flexibility, any freedom of choice. Let us proceed now to man, and discover whether despite his enormous flexibility he has *in any real sense* the freedom of choice which we might wish to think he has.

2.2 Man the 'Programmed' Organism

In describing instinctual behaviour as 'wired into' the organism we were implicitly using an analogy of a machine wired up to perform certain specific behaviours. We may have implied that such an analogy was inappropriate for organisms like man whose behaviour is very largely learned behaviour. It should not be forgotten, however, that computers can learn too. Computers are certainly 'wired up' but their mode of behaviour is different in one essential property from that of simpler devices; they can be *programmed to perform a large number of different behaviours.* Their wiring up is so extensive that the machine, by the insertion of basically simple logical instructions, can be made to perform a wide variety of different behaviours. One important behaviour (from the viewpoint of the central question to which these pages are addressed) is the manner in which computers make decisions.

In a computer program might be found the following kind of instruction: compare quantity A with quantity B. If A exceeds B go to instruction X, if on the other hand B exceeds A go to instruction Y. This sort of instruction would in general be contained within a much larger program. After feeding in the program the computer may spend a few minutes carrying out the sequence it will come across the instruction to compare A and B. We have asked it to do one of two things at this juncture, either take the course of action described by X or that described by Y. It will decide what to do by subtracting A from B, and if the answer is negative it will go on to instruction X, if positive to instruction Y. The important point is that although we have 'told' the computer what to do in the program *it will be making its own decision, and we as programmers may never learn exactly what decision was made at exactly what time.* The reader may consider that the computer's decision was a trivial one. After all we did tell it to make the choice in the first place. The question which should be considered, however, is whether the 'non-trivial' decisions which we make from day to day, like perhaps opting to live inside rather than outside a society, are essentially similar or dissimilar from that 'trivial' one made by the computer. Are our decisions really any different? When we make choices are we not comparing the fors and the againsts? How do we decide which party to vote for? From whom to buy a car, what make we shall get and so on? Indeed *is* there more than one kind of decision? If there is not, are we not 'subtracting' the fors from the againsts and *inevitably* opting to remain in society? The computer *cannot* make a decision which it is not programmed to make. Can the human being?

Another form of behaviour which computers are able to accomplish is learning. They can perform a sequence of acts, the consequences of which can be fed back into the machine. If the consequences are the desired ones the same sequence will be repeated in the future, if, however, the consequences are undesirable, another sequence will be tried, and this may not be a random choice, since the machine may be requested to *decide* which sequence to try next depending upon the exact form of the undesired consequences. This feedback of information and the consequent decision upon the exact form the behaviour should take is similar in many respects to learning as we know it in the animal and probably also in the human subject.

One may well wonder how serious the analogy between computer and higher level behaviour is meant to be taken. So let us examine a few theoretical notions of the changes which take place in the brain as a result of learning. Then perhaps the student will appreciate that the analogy is indeed a serious one.

2.3 A Few Neurological Considerations

It can be taken as axiomatic that the greater proportion of learning is accomplished by physical changes within the cerebral cortex. The cerebral cortex (cortex for short) is composed of a vastly complex network of individual nerve cells called neurones. Figure 1.3 shows just the uppermost layer in a section of the cat's cortex. Only the upper layer has been stained, otherwise the density of neurones beneath would blackout the picture entirely. Each individual neurone (Figure 1.4), consists of a cell body (the larger mass in the figure) a longish tail the axon through which nervous impulses generated in the cell body are transmitted and several dendrites which are the inputs to the neurone from other neurones in the vicinity. All in all then, the brain is 'wired up' in a very extensive fashion, but it is probably the case that a good deal of this wiring is in fact initially *random.* Many many different potential routes exist through the brain

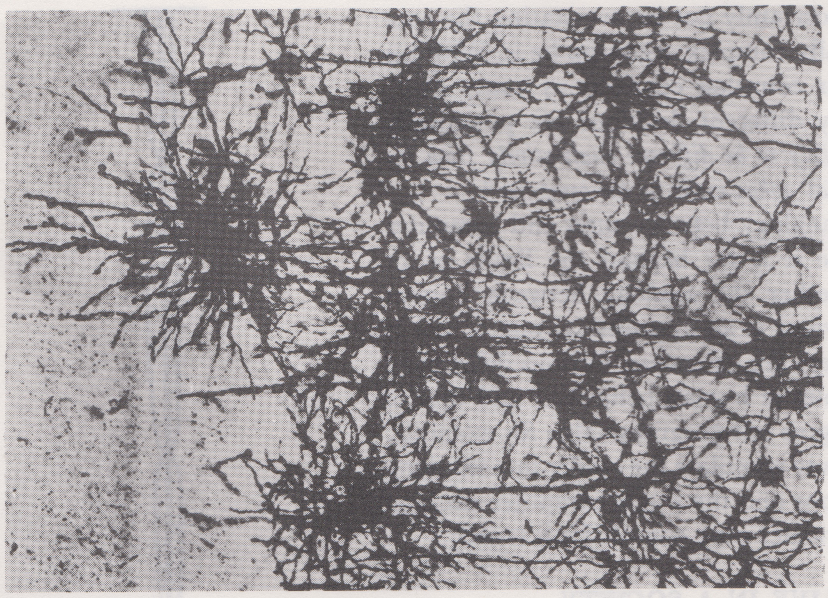

Figure 1.3 Photomicrograph of a section of cat cortex. The outer layer of the cortex is at the left.

because of the vast amount of inter-wiring, but in the process of learning, certain pathways acquire precedence over others, in that the probability that one pathway will be used will gradually become greater than that of another. Thus the process of learning may well be essentially *the organisation of the randomly wired cerebral cortex into a system which tends on the whole to do one sort of behaviour under one specific set of circumstances.*[1]

The advantage of allowing experience to organise a brain which by its very nature has few 'presuppositions' is obvious. The organism can adapt to a wide variety of circumstances, it can fit into environments which might destroy an instinctive (incontrovertibly wired) organism. Eskimos can learn to exist in the Arctic, Nomads in the desert, and our own children through the complexities of our technological environment.

The point of stating these neurological theories and facts is this: how and in what manner can we say that the cortex of man is organised, in the process of learning, into a system in which some brain pathways gain precedence over others; how can we say that *it is any different from the wiring-up which is typical of the bee?* Although the wiring in the bee is genetically determined and that in man largely determined by experience, it is likely that *the same basic neurological principles are at work.* Input pattern S (Stimulus) tends to give rise to output pattern R (Response) because the underlying neurophysiological functions[2] determine that it should do so. From this it should follow that if the bee has no option other than to live as an element in the hive, man can have no option but to live as an element within the society that has programmed him. Or is this overstating the case? It would certainly not be overstating the case if man were not the neurologically complex organism he is. With his 10 billion nerve cells with their countless connections many alternatives are open to him, many different decisions are potentially possible. *But are such decisions likely to be different qualitatively from the ones we were eager to label as 'trivial' when made by the computer?*

We do not wish to take the analogy between man and computer any further at this stage, since it is far beyond the limits of an introductory unit. In fact whether the analogy between human behaviour and computer behaviour is an appropriate one or not is largely a semantic question. There are, of course, obvious differences between the underlying principles of human behaviour and that of a computer: man is in some degree self-programmable for example. All we wish to accomplish here is to stimulate the reader into thinking out the nature of human decisions and the single computer decision we mentioned. The interested reader may consult Fink (1968).

3 PROGRAMMING MAN TO LIVE IN A SOCIETY

The quasi-random connectivity of the cortex allows for the establishment of specialised connections within the brain, which allows the organism to fit into almost any environment in which it is born and nurtured. This section deals with the techniques used by society which program man to behave in an 'appropriate' manner in society.

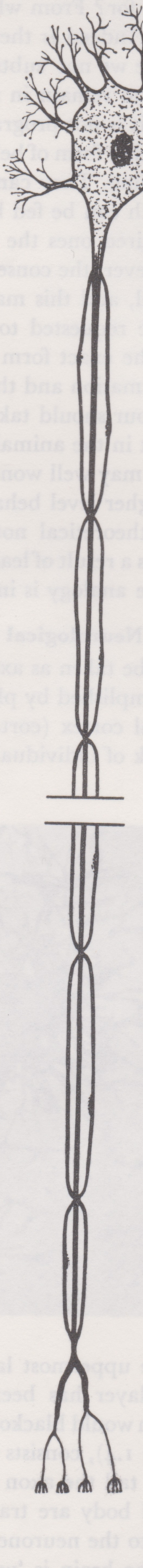

Figure 1.4 Idealised figure of a neurone. Information comes into the neurone through the dendrites and passes out via the axon.

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[1] The lower brain has more definite pathways and a good deal of the cortex is also definitely 'wired up'.

[2] Neurophysiology is the study of the function of the nervous system.

3.1 The Gregarious Instinct

William McDougal, an early English psychologist, considered human behaviour to be determined largely by instinct (1933). He postulated a large number of instincts, designed to cover the whole range of behaviour, in which man tends to engage. The list need not concern us, because it is largely of historic value, but within the list he included 'gregariousness', the tendency for man to congregate with his own kind. We know that man is almost always found in a group, and the occasional hermit can rarely be considered 'normal' in the accepted sense of the term. We also know that when man is faced with enforced isolation, that he gradually becomes disturbed as if some basic function were being tampered with. In one of the earlier experiments, for example, college students were paid simply to be alone with no stimulating material of any kind available to them during their isolation. The students soon gave up the experiment despite the fact that they were receiving a much higher wage for doing nothing than they subsequently received on their various vacation jobs. They preferred to work for less pay than to be isolated. But the fact that man is considerably more at home in a society than outside it does not necessarily imply that the gregarious behaviour is instinctive rather than learned. In fact none of the three broad criteria listed on pages 14 and 15 apply very well to human social behaviour.

As far as we can tell, social behaviour develops with training and it is different from group to group within our species. So we can at this juncture (but see later) be pretty confident that much of human social behaviour is learned, programmed in by experience, rather than genetically determined.

Human social behaviour also has the further characteristic of being capable of change when environmental conditions change such that the existing social system becomes maladaptive, as for example in war. Often, perhaps because of inbuilt codes of conduct, the change is not so complete as it might be to achieve the maximum adaptability, but change is there and it is going on around us continually. Can it be such a short time ago that people were hung by the neck until dead? How long ago was the exposure of the female thigh considered daring (except at the seaside)?

3.2 Socialisation

The process of learning, which takes place within a society, and is concerned with fitting the individual to his rôle as an element within society, is called 'socialisation'. The process is important enough to warrant a whole block to itself (Block 2) and so we shall be content here to simply introduce the topic.

Like many topics in Psychology, the reader may find it difficult to see the problem. After all he is a socialised animal himself, and although he is aware of the occasional deviant individual, he is quick to ascribe the deviant behaviour to some 'fault' in upbringing or birth. But deviant behaviour cannot necessarily be judged as faulty, only as different. It may for example be *more* adaptive for the individual; it may, as in the case of some demonstrations, be socially adaptive, to the ultimate benefit of the society.

Social anthropologists, notably Margaret Mead (e.g. 1928), in simply describing the social behaviour of 'primitive' communities illustrate well the fact that different patterns of socialisation produce individuals of vastly different values, who observe quite different rules of conduct and acquire different skills. Within our own society, although many of the rules, skills and values are more or less common to all individuals, and in a sense define that they belong to the same society, nevertheless, there are differences between individuals within a society in terms of the social learning they have undergone. Boys are treated differently from girls (Unit 6) and so behave differently, doctor's sons are often 'expected' to follow in father's footsteps and are therefore subject to different parental pressures than sons of miners whose parents more often specifically do *not* want son to follow father. Examples of socialisation within and between communities could be continued *ad infinitum*. The main point is that the individual personality is to a large extent moulded by the pattern of socialisation which it has undergone. Not only is one kind of socialisation likely to produce 'psychopaths',[1] criminals, alcoholics or boxers but will also influence the level of intelligence and the specific abilities of the individuals. Although differences in socialisation patterns are evident, the similarities are perhaps greater. The boy and the girl are both taught not to steal or lie, to eat food properly, not to be rude, etc. . . .

Thus we are 'programmed' by society to behave in a fairly predictable and acceptable manner. In fact we recognise members of our society by the behaviour they exhibit which is identical with our own. Much as the social behaviour of the bee is predictable so then, in some degree, is ours. We are unlikely to swear at the vicar's tea party, unlikely to condone rape, but likely to eat peas with a fork and not to belch in company (unless we are Arabs). Yet it was just the *predictability* of the bee's behaviour which made us conclude that probably it had no option other than to behave in its 'responsible' social fashion. Let us remind ourselves that the social programming is ultimately represented in the brain as an organisation of the interconnected neurones. To the extent that alternative pathways exist for the flow of information within the brain we are unpredictable; to the extent that we are unpredictable we have an option whether or not we conform to the pattern of socialisation programmed into the nervous system. But are the choices themselves not similar in kind to the 'trivial' one conducted by the computer?

We have emphasised in this section the difference between instinctive behaviour and behaviour which is learned. Since man is the extreme example of 'learning animal' he is different *quantitatively* from other animals who learn to fit into their surroundings. Thus, he is different from a dog in terms of the *extent* to which he has learned, and in terms of the *extent* to which he is socialised. However, an animal at an extreme is still an animal, and we shall see in the following section that man has needs which are common to the other animals. We shall also see that as a result of his socialisation yet other needs have been generated which are not common to other animals.

4 BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DRIVES

Although it is currently fashionable to question traditional motivational concepts, a consideration of the reasons for the scepticism need not concern us at present. (The interested reader is referred to a lengthy discourse by Bolles (1967), but this reading is not recommended at this stage.) The traditional view is that there exists a class of variables which 'goad' or energise behaviour in specific 'directions'. These are referred to by various names, 'needs', 'drives', 'motives', 'wants', 'desires' sometimes 'reasons'. For purposes of clarity we shall adopt the following set of definitions:

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[1] A psychopath is an individual who appears to have no 'social conscience'. He may be able to *state* what is considered right and wrong, but cannot *feel* right and wrong. Many persistent offenders are psychopaths.

1. A need will be defined as a deficit or an excess of some kind in the bodily tissues, for example a lack of water, sugar or oxygen or an excess of a hormone or carbon dioxide.
2. These 'tissue needs' in some manner induce a state of 'drive', that is they are converted into a more general neurophysiological state, which energises the organism to engage in an activity whose end result is to reduce the state of need in the tissues. Thus, for example, the thirsty organism seeks and drinks water, which replenishes the water content of the tissues.
3. A drive which is linked with the biological functions is called a biological or basic drive, Table 1 lists the basic drives (the list may not be in complete agreement with many motivational theorists, but represents a sensible consensus of opinion). There are two major characteristics which qualify a drive as a biological one
    (a) it must be inborn at least in some species
    (b) the survival of the individual or the species depends upon the drive being satisfied.

It will be noted, however, that we have included as many drives under the biological category as 'partially learned' as we have inborn. This is because there is not a satisfactory classification of drives and the one we have imposed does not fit perfectly, especially to human behaviour. The sexual behaviour in the rat for example is clearly inborn, in that rats reared in isolation from their kind will copulate successfully when mature with a receptive female. However, monkeys reared in isolation fail to copulate (Harlow and Harlow 1962). Our classification in Table 1 applies specifically to man, who clearly cannot be subject to this form of experimentation, but who would undoubtedly conform to the primate rather than the rodent pattern, if the experiment were conducted. (Munn 1951) illustrates the point rather well (p. 275), "Books (have been) written for the sexual education of newlyweds. If we possess a mating instinct (inborn drive to copulate successfully) why should we have to be told the ways in which to mate?" However, this view is not wholly convincing, because it fails to distinguish the tissue need, which is clearly an hormonal excess in the sexual example (see for example Beach 1956, Larssen 1956) from the efficient performance of the copulatory act. The isolated monkey probably does possess a tissue need corresponding to a sex drive, but has not learned the skills of interacting physically with another member of the species and the sex drive probably does not develop fully until initial contact is made. Considerations such as these make classification of the drives a difficult business. (Sexual behaviour even in the rat is not quite the automatic process which might be imagined from its description as an inborn drive. It is known for example that the copulatory behaviour of a satiated male rat can be 'rejuvenated' by the introduction of a different female (Fowler and Whalen, 1961). Much the same considerations apply to the maternal drive.

4.1 Exploration, Curiosity and Need for Stimulation

For reasons too numerous to mention, much of the research upon drives has been conducted upon the rat and much of this research has concentrated upon hunger and thirst, since these drives are easy to control and quantify. Typically, the hungry rat is required to perform some response, and is rewarded by food for correct execution of the response. So intense was the concentration upon behaviour in the deprived state through the thirties and forties that it became almost universally accepted that animals behave in order to reduce a need *and for no other reason.* The unmotivated animal was considered to be quiescent and all forms of positive action were said to require a drive otherwise it would not occur. No drive, no activity. Conversely, it was argued, if activity were observed *there must exist a drive to energise that activity.* Thus when experimenters took the time to observe their animals when they were not under experimental deprivation of some commodity and noticed that although the animal was apparently not deprived of any basic need it moved around its surroundings, sniffed at this, poked at that, it was assumed by some that a *curiosity drive* existed. It is difficult not to agree with this view when experiments of the following kind are considered.

Rats are placed in a transparent box. Inside is a lever, which can be easily depressed by pawing. Outside is mounted an electric bulb. Under some conditions the lever is connected to the bulb such that it acts as a switch. Under other conditions the lever and bulb are unconnected. A count is made of the number of times the rat depresses the lever when it is unconnected to the light and the number of times the lever is depressed when it functions as a switch. Rats press the lever much more often when it puts on the light than when it does not. What, other than curiosity, could possibly motivate the animal to switch a light on? After all it does not receive a reward in the accepted sense of the term; no tissue needs are reduced.

Although we may feel it necessary to postulate an exploratory or curiosity drive to account for findings like these we should not accept this explanation too readily. One characteristic of basic drives is that they increase as a function of the time spent in deprivation, for example thirst increases with the time spent without water, hunger increases with time spent without food. Yet it has been shown that animals deprived of the opportunity to explore do not explore when given the opportunity any more than ones previously given the opportunity to explore as much as they wish. It is likely, however, that a neurological system exists (probably the same one which controls sleep and wakefulness and the need during the waking hours to receive sensory stimulation) which influences exploratory behaviour and probably also curiosity. This system, called the Brain Stem Reticular Formation, appears to affect behaviour in many ways, and to be involved intimately with the intensity of drive states. But whether curiosity, and the need for sensory stimulation are considered basic drives is largely a semantic argument. It depends upon exactly how a drive is defined. For a full discussion of this topic the reader is referred to Berlyne (1960), but not as a necessary course commitment.

4.2 Society as a Source of Satisfaction of the Basic Drives

Primitive man was in a position to acquire (with considerable effort) all the materials necessary for the continuation of his own life and that of the species. For the economic reasons developed in later units it was clearly advantageous with respect to his 'wants' to form societies in which the individual could specialise. With economic specialisation came not only increased economic gain, but also increased *dependence* upon society. As one family restricted its effort towards producing commodity A leaving B to another family, so the dependence between families became increased. One family could not get along very well without another. Dependence upon other people for the satisfaction of the basic drives has reached very high levels in our society. We each perform a specialist function for which we are paid money, we in turn pay the grocer for our food, the Water Board for our water and so on.

This is, of course, the easy way of doing things, but there are shortcomings. We are allowed to remain within society so long as we abide by the rules. Once we do the 'natural' thing and steal food if we are hungry and have no money, we are removed from society into institutions, which have four basic functions; to punish the individual because he has punished society ("he mustn't get away with that"): to punish the conduct (on the assumption that the conduct will cease by punishing it): to 're-socialise' the individual and to remove the individual from the society so that he cannot disrupt it.

With the improved economic gain then comes a rider. You can satisfy your basic needs within society, provided you live by the rules. The satisfaction of the basic drives is, therefore, achieved at a *cost* to the individual. To satisfy his hunger he must *buy* food, to satisfy his sexual drives it is prescribed that he go through a complex legal process called marriage. The more economically advanced the society is, the more easily are basic needs attained and in general, the more ritualistic the accompanying behaviour. Children are well fed, but they cannot pick up the food in their hands, they must use implements and in the correct manner.

The latter example of the social 'cost' of satisfying the hunger drive is a good illustration of the fact that society happens in most instances to have a very good reason for most of the rules it imposes upon the individual. There are obvious medical advantages in using clean metal implements to place food into the mouth; in the marriage example there are good reasons why the production of children should be confined to a formalised family group. In the stealing example, society has good reason (if perhaps not a valid one) for the maintenance of possessions. Thus the rules laid down by society, which we have described perhaps derogatively as 'cost' really exist to preserve the society.

The preservation of the society rather than that of the individual or the species depends upon the satisfaction of the social drives, which is our next topic. But before we begin, it's as well to consider the central question of why men live in societies in the light of what we have learned in this section. Clearly one very good reason for man living in society is that there he can attain his basic needs easily. This answer to the question is, of course, at a different level from the previous answer, that in a sense man has no option but to live in society. I do not say to myself, "I will continue to live in society because my basic needs are better catered for inside society than outside". If the reason I live in society were as simple and obvious as this there would be no need to write about it. Thus although satisfaction of the basic needs is a good *reason* for living in society, this reason cannot be considered a *cause* for living in society. The cause ultimately resides within the structured nervous system, and within the pattern of external and internal stimulation to which the system is subjected.

4·3 The Social Drives

Human beings do not only wish to eat, drink, copulate, etc., they have other 'needs' as well. They wish to succeed in their specialities, they wish to acquire wealth, they wish to be praised, to be loved; they wish to climb mountains. At the foot of Table 1 is part of a list of social drives suggested by Murray (1938). For the rest the reader is advised to consult the original text.

As we try to list what people want to do we find we are in fact attempting to list the whole range of their activities. In fact most of our life seems geared to our wishes. Sometimes we find that we 'have' to do things that we do not wish to do, but usually in these cases we find that the reasons for doing them is because two or more drives are in conflict.[1] The spinster looks after her aged mother, which she says she does not want to do, because her wishes of freedom are overcome by the wish to care for her aged mother.

4·4 Are Social Drives Necessary?

On page 22 when we considered the reasons for postulating the existence of a curiosity drive, it was stated that one reason was the tendency for theoreticians to assume that behaviour could *only* occur in the presence of a drive. If we extend the argument, we must say that all human activity, like climbing mountains, must be associated with a drive (the mountain climbing drive?). If we want to mow the lawn, do we have a lawn mowing drive?[2]

It is easiest to discuss the problem of whether or not the social drive is a useful one by referring again to a machine analogy. (For those who are unmechanical, do not despair: there is no need to know anything about machines to follow the argument.) It is easily possible to construct a machine which will mow your lawn without your help. As it comes to the edge of the lawn, a device (sensitive perhaps to a sudden dip in the surface) will cause the machine to make a turn and carry on in the opposite direction. Having started the machine we observe (from a comfortable hammock) that the machine is doing approximately what we used to do with the handmower. Now we ask ourselves, "Why does the machine cut the lawn?" In answering the question we might speculate about its sensitive device which enables it to turn, or perhaps about the principles of the electric motor. It would not occur to us to think in terms of the machine's *motives*. Yet we are concerned about human 'motives'. Why? Is it not perhaps easier to think in terms of human beings as self-propelling machines? Is it not best to consider human social motives in terms of tendencies ultimately represented by some organisation within the brain? It is true that the *feeling* we experience when we gaze at our uncut lawn is similar to that when we meditate over a glass of beer on a hot day. We 'want' to cut the lawn as we 'want' to drink, but this is not evidence for equating the two 'wants' as variables of the same kind. For example no greater need is necessarily generated for cutting the lawn if we have been deprived of lawn cutting for a week or so. The student may enjoy thinking about this topic. It is well worth the effort.

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[1] Drives are in conflict when the action appropriate to the satisfaction of one drive is incompatible with that of another.

[2] For a discussion of the status of the social drive in psychological theory, see Hunt, 1960.

4.5 The Genesis of Social Drives

Since many human activities (hobbies are an excellent example) are not in any direct way associated with the satisfaction of a basic drive, the question of how they are acquired and how these activities seem to be energised by conscious desires to perform them is a question which has caused considerable debate in Psychology over the years. It is the traditional view that all activities and their drives are ultimately tied to basic drives. Let us consider the dependence which man exhibits towards others of his species – his gregariousness. The drive which leads man to seek others was traditionally considered to be a generalisation[1] from his early dependence upon his mother. Because solace was found in the arms of his mother, and since his mother was another person, a member of society, so solace is sought within the company of other people. The need of his mother's company in turn was considered a simple learning process. The child became hungry, cried, his mother took him into her arms and fed him. The hunger drive was reduced and, therefore, the child associated hunger reduction with the mother. But at the same time reduction in hunger was also associated with the pleasurable comfort in the mother's arms; thus bodily contact with another person and dependence on other people becomes tied to satisfaction of the basic drive of hunger. Contact of a social as well as physical kind with other people, therefore, becomes associated with drive reduction, through generalisation. (The Freudian theory also considered sexual stimulation by the mother in the process of caring for the child to have similar consequences.)

The now famous experiments carried out by the Harlows (see Harlow, 1959) has brought such theorising to a sudden halt. It was shown that it was not the food-producing qualities of the mother which made the infant monkey seek her out for comfort, but the mere fact that she was *soft*. In other words the infant is equipped with an inborn tendency to seek solace in a soft object. It has an instinct in the true sense of the word to seek out a mother, and the exact stimulus quality it seeks is softness. One must wonder in the face of such evidence as this to what extent McDougal may after all have been right. If an inbuilt tendency to approach softness exists, why not an inbuilt tendency to react to people? In fact Fantz (1966) has demonstrated that just such a mechanism may exist. He devised a technique of observing exactly which object a very young baby was fixating. It was shown that the pattern (a) in Figure 1.5 was more frequently examined by the baby than that shown in Figure 1.5 (b). Notice that the figures have exactly the same components, but in one the pattern of the figure represents a cartoon face, whereas the other is meaningless. Young children then tend to look at faces more than other *equally complex* patterns, indicating that it is at least a possibility that the face pattern has an inborn attention-getting property.[2]

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[1] Stimulus generalisation is the tendency to respond to stimuli similar to the stimulus which originally elicited the response.

[2] Clearly, if this result had *not* emerged, the evidence would favour the interpretation that infants learn to examine faces. Since the attention-getting property of the face was evident from an early age, it remains a possibility that the face pattern is responded to instinctively.

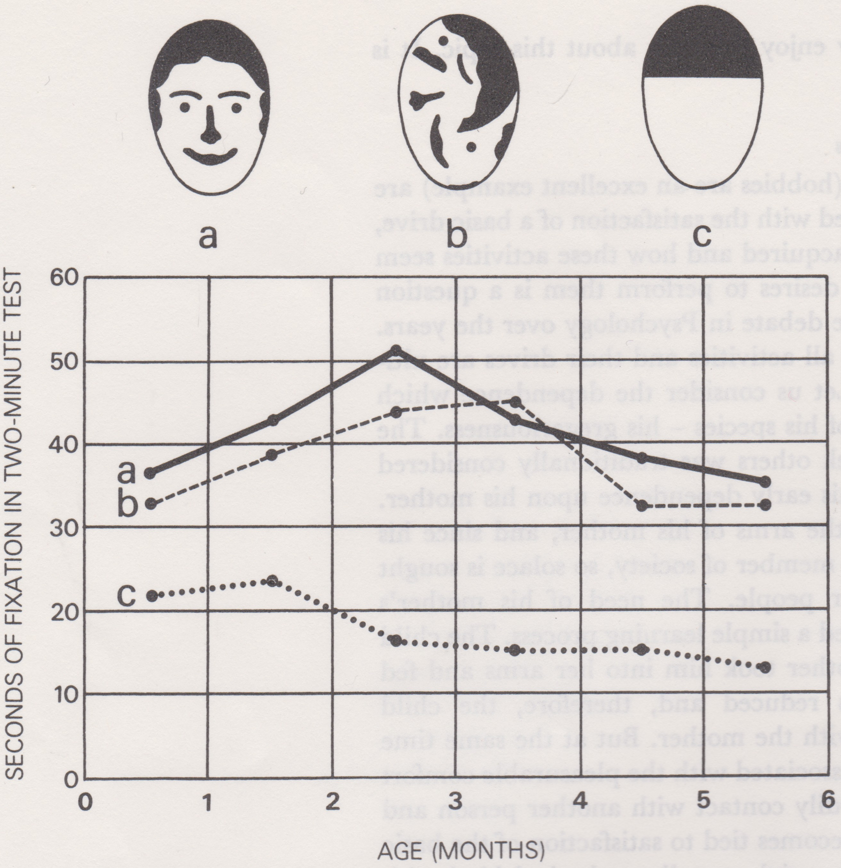

Figure 1.5 The graph shows the time spent on examining the figures.

The implications of Harlow's and Fantz's findings are considerable with respect to the question of why man lives in a society, since they re-open the question of the instinctive tendency for man to approach his kind. It, therefore, may be at least postulated that the frustration of such an instinctive behaviour will induce symptoms in man similar to those shown by the lower animals when they are prevented from completing the chain of behaviour once it is started. The following quote from Tinbergen at least shows what the effects are on the stickleback:

> A male stickleback, for instance, cannot ejaculate sperm before the female has deposited her eggs in the nest. The appearance of a female strongly arouses his sexual impulses. When the female does not respond to his zig zag dance by following him to the nest . . . the male invariably shows nest ventilating movements, often of high intensity and of long duration. The amount of displacement fanning can even be used as a very reliable measure of the strength of his sexual motivation. . . . This doubtless is the reason why so many activities are parts of courtship patterns. Male ducks for instance regularly preen their plumage during courtship . . . European jays wipe their bills. Herring gulls and many other birds . . . feed their mates during courtship. . . . (Tinbergen, 1951.)

Tinbergen also makes the following reference to man:

> Another phenomenon suggesting an instinctive organisation in man basically similar to that found in animals is displacement activity. Displacement activities are by no means rare in man. They are not so easily recognised as in animals because in man learned patterns, like lighting a cigarette, handling keys or handkerchief etc., often act as displacement activities. However, innate patterns may function as outlets in man too. The general occurrence of scratching behind one's ear in conflict situations; in women it mostly takes the form of adjusting non-existing disorder of the coiffure, in the man it consists of the handling of the beard or moustache . . . even in the clean shaven era. . . . (Tinbergen, 1951.)

If it were indeed the case that man's tendency towards gregariousness were instinctive, and only the exact form of his social behaviour determined by learning, we could no doubt conclude that man has no option other than to live in society or pay the price of frustration. However, in isolation man can always *imagine* that he has people around him, so perhaps we shall never know to what extent social behaviour is wired in.

4.6 Learned Drives

Whatever we may think of the extent of the genetic determination of behaviour in man, we cannot deny that it is possible to learn drives. Addiction in many of its forms bears witness to this fact. Experimental demonstrations of the formation of learned drives are now plentiful in the literature, the induction of fear being the principal object of the experimentation.[1] Perhaps the earliest study was that conducted by Watson & Rayner (1920) on a nine-month-old baby called Albert. Albert was rather fond of white rats, but fear of rats was induced by presenting the rat and a loud noise simultaneously. After only five pairings of rat with noise Albert became afraid of the rat alone and generalised his fear to other similar objects like a rabbit, a dog, a sealskin coat and even a mass of cotton wool. Although fear was certainly induced in Albert, to what extent can it be called a drive? Fear is fairly obviously the drive to run if we come across a tiger, but to qualify as a drive it is considered necessary to demonstrate that such induced fear can be used as a drive to aid in learning. This was the purpose of some famous experiments by Neal Miller (1941, 1948).

Miller gave rats a painful electric shock when placed in a compartment which was painted white. The rats learned that by running from the white compartment through a doorway into a black compartment they could avoid the shock. In the next phase of the experiment, the door between the compartments was shut, but could be opened by turning a wheel. The rats were then placed in the white compartment, no shock was given, and it was postulated that if the induced fear in fact had drive properties the rats would *learn to open the door*. About a half of the rats did learn the response indicating that the reduction in fear had rewarding (reinforcing) properties.

The social drives listed in Table 1 (insofar as they can be said to exist) were probably induced in much the same manner as fear. Socially approved responses by the child are rewarded with praise, approval, pats on the head or ice creams, whereas 'anti-social' behaviour is negatively reinforced[2] or ignored. Notice the implication, however. For a response to be learned it is generally accepted that a drive has to be reduced, but what drive is reduced when a child is praised, or approved of or patted on the head? The general opinion is that *anxiety* is reduced, in that the child feels himself to be wanted and in a position to receive the continued protection of his parent.

Thus society creates learned drives, and once they are created it uses the very drives it creates to train the individual in the rules, skills and values of

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[1] In Table 1 we list Escape as a biological drive, yet here we shall show how fear, the drive to escape, is in fact learned. Escape is defined as a biological drive because in many situations and in some species, animals tend to escape from situations instinctively before pain is met. Scattering of chicks from the shadow of the hawk (pp. 12–13) was an example.

[2] Negative reinforcement is essentially the technique of punishing the organism for making a given response.

the society. Thus the values and rules of the parent are transmitted to the child and he in turn transmits these to the next generation. Thus is society maintained.

Just as the basic drives were easily obtained in society, so many of the learned drives can only be satisfied within society. Robinson Crusoe had to wait until Friday came, and had learned to speak his language before he could receive praise from someone other than himself. *Thus man can be said to live in society, because he receives his social rewards from it.*

5 A FINAL WORD

The three purposes of this unit were to introduce the student to psychology as a science which studies behaviour, to give the student some insight into man as an individual and to attempt an answer to the question – Why do men live in Societies?

The first of these purposes was, we hope, fulfilled by sampling a fairly wide area of experiment and theory, so that the student might be provided with 'anchors' of which he might say "That is a psychological experiment", or "That sounds like the sort of theory a psychologist might formulate". Even with the wide coverage, the student is bound to be biased at this stage, because we have been dealing with a fairly narrow topic, man as an element in society. So it should be emphasised that the study of behaviour in the *very widest* sense of the term is the object of Psychology. A Psychologist is as likely to be found investigating road accident statistics as investigating the function of the retinal cells of the eye which enable an organism to see colour.

The insight into human nature, if any has been gained, is likewise biased by the form of the central question. We have chosen in these pages to contrast man and insect. One, the epitome of instinctive control of behaviour, the other the evolutionary limit to the mediation of behaviour by way of learning. But the problem of how learning takes place has had to be left for future units. We have emphasised man's animal nature by describing his biological drives; we also emphasised his essentially 'human' nature by describing all too briefly his socialisation and his learned drives.

The major purpose, that of considering why man lives in society was a considerably more difficult aim to pursue. It was answered at two distinct levels of analysis. One was the obvious: man lives in society for what he gets out of it. What does he get? He gets his basic drives and his socially acquired drives satisfied relatively *easily* in society. The second level of analysis was designed to make the student think in psychological terms, as well as to justify the answer "man really has little other option". In the process of justification, we had to investigate some of the ultimate determinants of behaviour lying within the cellular organisation of the brain. If the argument on this point still seems obscure, let the student meditate over the following problem, before he puts down this text. What makes the donkey follow the carrot? The carrot is *outside* the donkey, yet it is one of the 'causes' of the donkey's running. If it is to affect the donkey's muscles it must be present *inside* the donkey in some form. But, if the donkey is satiated, it will not run for the carrot, therefore, it is the *internal* state of drive accompanied by the *internal* representation of the carrot, which constitutes the causative state. Thus to say that the 'reason' that the donkey runs, is because it 'wants' the carrot, is *not* a causative explanation of the behaviour, indeed it is not an explanation at all.

TABLE I

CLASSIFICATION OF THE DRIVES

BIOLOGICAL DRIVES	**To Breathe** **Drink** **Eat** **Eliminate Waste Products** **Rest** **Avoid Pain**	These drives are *inborn*. Upon their satisfaction rests the survival of the *individual*.
	To Mate **Care for the young**	These drives are *partially inborn*. Upon their satisfaction rests the survival of the *species*.
	To Escape **Attack**	These drives have *inborn* and *learned* characteristics. Upon their satisfaction rests the survival of the *individual and species*.
	To Explore **Seek Sensory Stimulation**	These drives may be *inborn* and *learned*. Upon their satisfaction rests the survival of the *individual* and *species*.
SOCIAL DRIVES	**To Praise** **Achieve** **Dominate** **Submit** **Acquire** **Belong** **Help**	These drives are *learned* and upon their satisfaction rests the survival of *society*.

APPENDIX

Language: The Major Tool of the Functioning Society

No introduction to psychology would be complete without reference to communication. This topic is placed in an Appendix, because in general it does not bear upon the question of *why* men live in societies, but upon how societies function. In Psychology the concept of communication is used in at least two broad areas of study. For our present purposes the more important use of the term is to describe the passage of information between members of a species, and from one species to another. Inter-species communication is achieved when, for example, a cat wags its tail, telling us to keep our distance, or when a dog does the same, telling us it is safe to approach. Inter-species communication is in a sense the major purpose behind much animal experimentation in psychology. When we teach a rat to run a maze for example, we are in effect experimenting on techniques of telling the rat the way we want it to go. Another usage of communication has to do with the passage of information *within* the nervous system. Man can be considered a communication channel in which information arrives via the senses is transformed in various ways within the nervous system and 'emerges' as a muscular or glandular response. Application of the concept in this latter way will emerge during the second level courses.

The Form of Inter-human Communication

Communication lies at the very basis of society, in fact it helps in the very process of *defining* an independent social entity. A bee entering a hive is required to 'signal' at the entrance that he is a member of the hive, and unless he transmits the correct 'code', he will be rejected as a 'foreigner'. Thus knowing the language of a hive is the only means of entry into the society. This has obvious parallels with acceptance into human society. Not only are different nationalities defined in terms of language, but internal 'sub-societies' are defined to a large extent by accent and common communication links. Within the tennis club, we do not become accepted unless we are able to 'talk tennis'; within a heterogeneous community like a university, sub-groups are formed, because communication is easier between academic and academic, student and student, technician and technician. Even deep-rooted prejudices may be overcome or tempered by language. A colour-prejudiced person was once heard to say of a negro, "He's one of us *really*. He speaks without a *trace* of an accent. Educated at Eton you know." Thus the form of the language, its semantic content, and its idiosyncratic features define to a large extent the society to which an individual belongs.

If a bee with its minute nervous system can communicate such complex information as the location of a food source, the communicative powers of man with his immense brain might be expected to be considerably greater. It is. The superiority lies not so much in the number of signal units (words) which a man possesses, but in the property of human language called 'open endedness' (Chomsky, 1957). Open endedness refers to the fact that an almost infinite number of different messages can be sent with the finite number of words which we have at our disposal. Simply by changing the *order* of the same words different information can be communicated, for example change "the dog bit the man" into "the man bit the dog" and we not only change the description of the event, but add surprisal value and humour to it. The open endedness of language also refers to the fact that *unique* messages can be sent. Each of us every day say things which we have never said before because there is the capacity built into language to transmit meanings which have never before been transmitted by anyone, for example the sentence "I am writing Unit 1 for the Open University Foundation Course within the Faculty of Social Sciences and am concentrating on communication at the moment" is most unlikely ever to have been said before.

Language in human society has two major purposes:

1. It enables changes in behaviour to occur from the influence of one person on others. Almost any utterance affects in some degree the present or future behaviour of the recipient of the message. This may be a trivial change as in "Would you like a cup of tea" but may be of considerable significance as in "Let's have a war with Transylvania".
2. Written language has enabled the accurate communication of facts, theories and philosophies across generations, so that facts do not need to be re-discovered and progress is accordingly speeded up.

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Unit 2

Men and Government

THE BILL MUST GO THROUGH
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CONTENTS UNIT 2

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 36

1 INTRODUCTION 37
  1.1 Aims and methods 37
  1.2 'Normative' and 'Empirical' approaches and the relevance of political philosophy 37

2 MEN WITHOUT GOVERNMENT 38
  2.1 Men outside society 38
  2.2 The True State of Nature 38
  2.3 'Truly Virtuous' Men without Government 39
  2.4 An Anarchist's view of Government 39

3 MAN THE POLITICAL ANIMAL 40
  3.1 Men live under government for self-protection 40
  3.2 Government provides a structure of law and seeks legitimacy 43
  3.3 By living under government men can gain rights 46
  3.4 Liberty and the development of individual talents under government 47
  3.5 Only through the state can an individual gain an identity 51

4 CHALLENGING THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING UNDER GOVERNMENT 52
  4.1 Government perpetuating Inequality and Injustice 53
  4.2 The state as an instrument of class oppression 55

BIBLIOGRAPHY 57

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources for material used in this unit:

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Radio Times/Hulton Picture Library, Figures 2.1, 2.6–2.12.

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MEN AND GOVERNMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and Methods

An obvious answer to the question "Why do people live in societies?" is to say: "Because they gain something from it." This is how we shall approach the question in this unit. In doing so the intention is to introduce you to ideas about politics and government; ideas which are centred upon a supplementary question we can set for ourselves: "What do men gain by living under government?" or perhaps more accurately "What do men *think* they gain by living under government?"

This introduction to political ideas will necessarily be brief and superficial. One method we shall use is to quote a paragraph or two from a political philosopher to bring out a particular idea but in doing this there is a danger of oversimplification, of extracting the odd paragraph from a tightly-knit argument and thereby distorting it. Also, we shall only present an isolated idea whereas the theorist will have built up a whole complex of ideas in his political analysis. These are the dangers and limitations we face but against this it is the political philosophers who have asked some of the 'big' questions about society and by examining some of their ideas you will have tasted the flavour of political theory and perhaps be stimulated to develop some of the ideas which are introduced here against your own experience.

1.2 'Normative' and 'Empirical' Approaches and the Relevance of Political Philosophy

There are two further general points which must be made. First, much political philosophy is based not upon what *is* but what men think *should be.* That is, it is based on 'normative' not 'empirical' judgements. An 'empirical' approach is an attempt to discover what *is* while a 'normative' tries to say what, in the opinion of the author, *should be.*[1] When John Stuart Mill wrote his essay on 'Liberty' he was not attempting to make a record of what liberties then existed. Instead he was advancing a case for the liberty which he thought *should* exist. Obviously, therefore, he makes a 'normative' judgement and he meets challenges couched in normative terms. His critics accused him of advocating too much liberty. They thought there *should* be more discipline and less liberty. (When we return to the study of government and politics later in the course you will be introduced to approaches with greater empirical emphasis.)

The second general point is that political theorists are men of their time and place. The questions which are uppermost in their minds are major questions of their own societies. The assumptions, the beliefs, the prejudices which are woven into their theories are also products of their particular backgrounds. For example, Thomas

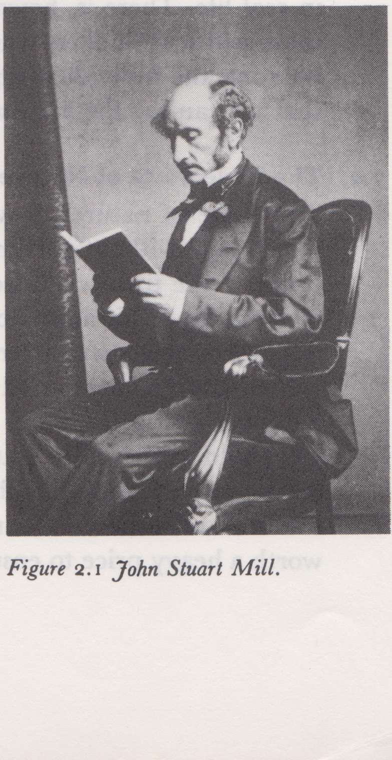

Figure 2.1 John Stuart Mill.

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[1] This is a point which was discussed in the first radio programme.

Hobbes and John Locke were men of a revolutionary age in English history. They were caught up in the great 17th-century constitutional conflict between monarch, parliament, army and protector. This was a time when Englishmen were individually and directly faced with momentous questions about where their loyalty lay, and by what right a particular government could claim obedience, and so naturally it was these questions of a revolutionary age which caught the attention of Hobbes and Locke.

It is not only the political thinkers whose ideas are conditioned by the circumstances of their time. Each of us evaluates in relation to our norms, our beliefs and our own particular problems. We are, at least in part, creatures of particular circumstances. Yet, having accepted the importance of our own circumstances in determining our political interests and ideas, we can also recognise that many of the questions which political philosophers have asked challenge men of every age including our own. "Why should I obey the government?" "What are the limits of the demands the government can make on me?" "Have I the right to oppose the government and if so in what way?" "Can I participate in government and if so how?" These and many similar questions have been asked by the Greeks, by mediaeval clerics, by Renaissance scholars, by 19th-century humanists and are still being asked today.

The study of political philosophy is therefore not just a study of the past. By looking to the past we can draw on the ideas, attitudes and wisdom of previous ages to gain a greater understanding of ourselves and our own society. We can join in an eternal debate. There can be no absolutes, no final decisions, no one theory which explains all. But the fascination of the debate is that it involves us all.

2 MEN WITHOUT GOVERNMENT

2.1 Men Outside Society

In trying to answer such complex questions as 'How does society serve men?' 'What advantages do we gain from living in society, and in particular from living under government?' some political theorists have started by trying to imagine individuals outside society, free of government control. This has involved them in flights of fancy, in creations of the imagination, for none of us have experience of men outside some form of society or under some form of government. Robinson Crusoe has his place in the novel but not in real life. There is, however, a valid reason for this approach, for those political thinkers who have adopted it argue that it is only by isolating the individual and starting from him as a separate entity that we can lay the foundations for an understanding of society.

2.2 The True State of Nature

The 'state of nature', in which individuals lived outside organised society and without government, was a common concept of the 17th century, the time when Locke and Hobbes were writing, and both of them used this approach. Hobbes in particular emphasised that organised society was a very delicate plant, that it was not something we could take for granted as a 'natural' growth. There was always a danger that social order and government would break down, and we would return to a 'state of nature' in which it was a matter of every man for himself. Hobbes feared such a situation and so for him the 'state of nature' was something to be avoided. Accordingly it was worth a heavy price to ensure that we had government which would give us peace and order. We shall return later to Hobbes' ideas, but for the present let us look at some other approaches to a situation of men without government.

2.3 'Truly Virtuous' Men Without Government

Among political thinkers who have used their imaginations to envisage men without government are some who have created mythical, idealised societies in which the coercive rôle of government has been unnecessary because men have become 'truly virtuous'. This introduces an interesting view in which government is required only because of man's deficiencies. If we were truly virtuous government would not be required, but as it is we simply cannot be trusted to live together without some controlling force dictating to us how we should behave to others. Sometimes this view has had religious overtones based on the belief of man's natural imperfections. Because of these imperfections, so the argument runs, man in this world must accept an obedience to the government, he must "render to Caesar that which is Caesar's" but live in the faith that an ideal existence lies ahead on a quite different plane in which the forms of earthly government will have no place.

Other thinkers have been optimistic about man's ability to eliminate his earthly imperfections and to create government-free Utopias. Later we shall examine what has probably been the most influential of all these approaches, the political ideas of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, but there is another very clear example in the course *Reader* (*Understanding Society*, p. 24). This is the mythical society of the Troglodytes which was described by Baron de Montesquieu, an 18th-century French writer. As you will see when you refer to the *Reader*, the moral of Montesquieu's myth is twofold. First that truly virtuous men do not require government. Second, that men may fall back on government as an excuse for their imperfections, as a means of avoiding self-discipline, and it was because of this that the venerable old man refused to become their ruler.

2.4 An Anarchist's View of Government

Government because of man's imperfections is the approach we have just examined. The whole assumption is turned upside down by anarchists who claim that it is *because* of government that man is imperfect. They argue that if government were eliminated, man would reveal his natural 'goodness', and live in peace, friendship and prosperity. This provides another quite distinctive approach to the question we have set ourselves. Emma Goldman, an American writing in 1910, stated the anarchists' case very plainly. She wrote:

> The goal of Anarchism is the freest possible expression of all the latent powers of the individual. Oscar Wilde defines a perfect personality as 'one who develops under perfect conditions, who is not wounded, maimed or in danger'. A perfect personality, then, is only possible in a state of society where man is free to choose the mode of work, the conditions of work, and the freedom to work. One to whom the making of a table, the building of a house or the tilling of the soil, is what the painting is to the artist and the discovery to the scientist – the result of inspiration, of intense longing, and deep interest in work as a creative force. That being the ideal of Anarchism, its economic arrangements must consist of voluntary productive and distributive associations, gradually developing into free communism, as the best means of producing with the least waste of human energy . . .
>
> Such free display of human energy being possible only under complete individual and social freedom, Anarchism directs its forces against the third

> and greatest foe of all social equality; namely the State, organised authority, or statutory law – the dominion of human conduct.
>
> Just as religion has fettered the human mind, and as property, or the monopoly of things, has subdued and stifled man's needs, so has the State enslaved his spirit, dictating every phase of conduct. 'All government in essence', says Emerson, 'is tyranny.' It matters not whether it is government by divine right or majority rule. In every instance its aim is the absolute subordination of the individual . . . (Goldman, 1910, p. 61.)

3 MAN THE POLITICAL ANIMAL

There have been utopian dreamers, there have been anarchists in every age and they still campaign for their particular beliefs but so far their voices have always been those of a small minority. Other political thinkers, even in flights of imagination and even among those who are suspicious of the power exercised by government, have usually accepted that man is not only a social but also a political animal.[1] Those who start by imagining man outside society or societies without government almost always return to man in society with government, because this is what we all know and have experienced. For most of us, society and polity are inseparable. We accept for good or ill that governments exist, that some will rule and some will be ruled, that Aristotle was right when he said: "Man is by nature a political animal." It is this acceptance of his political nature which leads us to such questions as "Why should men obey their governments?" and "Should limits be placed upon rulers and if so what limits?" It also leads us to our main question: "What do men gain by living under government?"

3.1 Men Live Under Government for Self-Protection

Among others, Thomas Hobbes said that men live under government for self-protection; for the peace and order it provides. Without this order not only would each of us be in constant physical danger but none of the arts of civilisation could flourish. Hobbes wrote in his book *Leviathan*:

> Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters, no Society; and which is worst of all, continual feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.
>
> To this warre of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice. Force, and Fraud, are in warre, the two Cardinall vertues. Justice, and Injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor mind. (Hobbes, Chapter XIII, pp. 96–97, 98.)

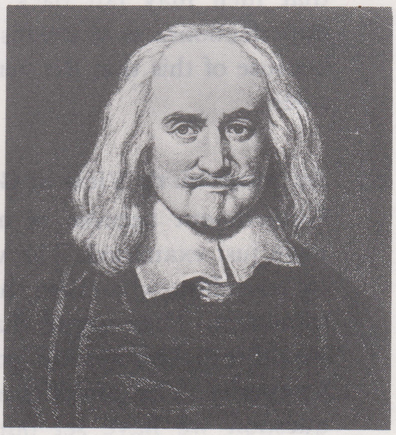

Figure 2.2 Thomas Hobbes.

Hobbes believed that to obtain his self-protection under government the individual must accept any claims the ruler made upon him. But in return the government must be capable of giving the individual protection.

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[1] For purposes of analysis we often artificially divide man into 'economic', 'territorial', 'political' man and so forth.

> The Obligation of Subjects to the Sovereign, is understood to last as long and no longer, than the power lasteth, by which he is able to protect them. For the right men have by Nature to protect themselves, when none else can protect them, can by no Covenant be relinquished. (Hobbes, Chapter XXI, p. 170.)

There are recent examples of the sort of situation Hobbes envisaged when governments are unable to keep order. In October 1969 when the Montreal police went on strike some people took to the streets rioting and looting. On a much grander scale the chaos that followed the breakdown of government in the Congo in the early 1960s would for Hobbes have appeared as a "warre of every man against every man", in which the lives of many Congolese became "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short".

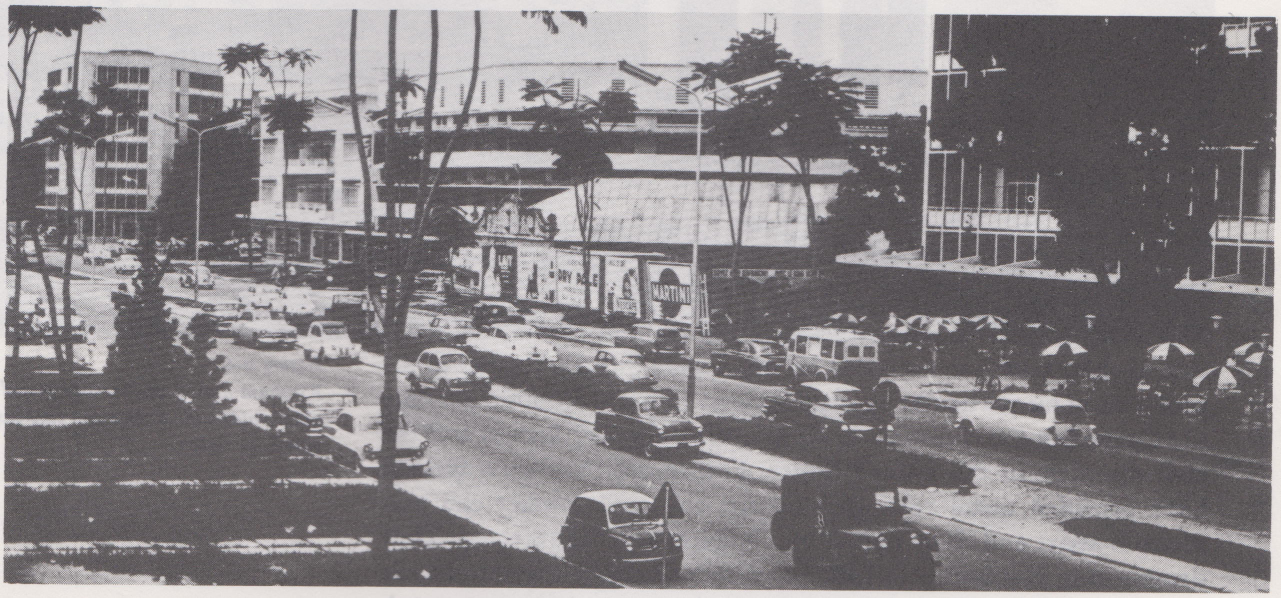

Figure 2.3
Kinshasa, capital of the Congo, before the troubled period, A busy, modern, well ordered city.

Disorder in the Congo followed almost immediately after the country's independence from Belgium. This is no place to examine the causes of the disorder, but its effects were as dramatic as Hobbes would have envisaged. The violence began when troops mutinied against their white officers. The army was quickly transformed from a disciplined body responsible to a government for the provision of security and order into a series of armed factions fighting each other and terrorising sections of the population. The government lost control of events, and for periods there was, in a very real sense, no government. In the absence of a Congolese government, the United Nations intervened in an attempt to do the job that Hobbes had said must be done by any government – the provision of order. Even then there was a long period of violence and disorder. The violence took many forms. There were attacks on white people, the old rulers, with women raped and priests paraded naked through the streets. There was fierce inter-tribal fighting between such people as the Luba and Lulua in which thousands were killed. As well as the destruction of life, the absence of government in the Congo saw a breakdown of services and the disappearance of the products of a peaceful and ordered life. Water and electricity services failed, towns returned to the bush. With the attempt of Katanga to break away from the rest of the country the Congo conflict developed into a civil war.

Happily, the Congo example can be completed by recording that the civil war was settled and a new government emerged which restored order and created conditions in which, in Hobbes' terms, there is a "place for Industry . . . Culture . . . Building", etc.

Civil wars anywhere can breed conditions in which control breaks down and the government is no longer an institution for preserving order, but a prize being fought for by rival factions. We have already noted that Hobbes lived in a period of civil war in England and questions concerned with individual protection and the provision of order which so exercised his mind were directly related to the problems of his particular age and society. In our own time, not only the Congo but the civil wars in Korea, Vietnam and Nigeria and the civil disorders in the United States, France and Northern Ireland have provided awful reminders of the way civil conflict can tear societies apart and leave individuals helpless and unprotected. They demonstrate Hobbes' points that civil order and security are fragile creations, and that the provision of order is among the government's most important tasks.

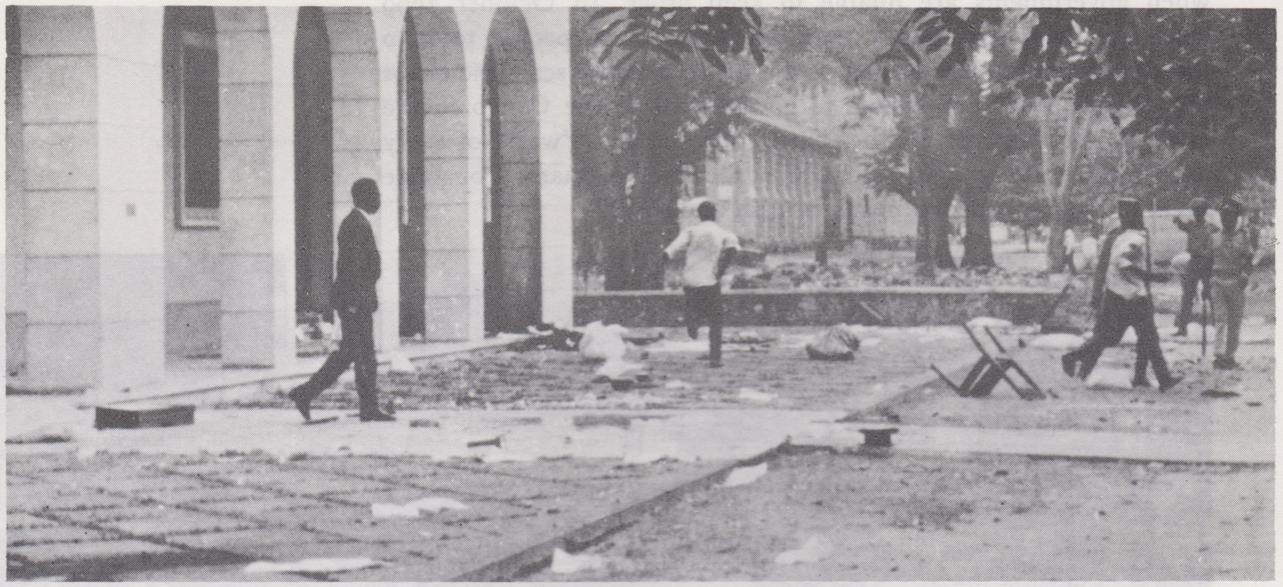

Figure 2.4
Kinshasa during the troubled period: chaos outside the Portuguese Embassy after attack by rioters.

Even governments which do not face civil war may face local disorders. Such local challenges may range anywhere between those of regional war lords in pre-communist China, to attempts by urban gangsters like Al Capone in Chicago to substitute their control over a particular section of society for that of the central government. These challenges can be associated with the challenges which occur in civil war situations when the structure of the state is brought into question. The social base on which the government rests was questioned in the Civil War in the United States when the southern states tried to break away, and in Nigeria when Biafra tried to secede. The argument of the secessionists was that a separate south or a separate Biafra was a *better* base for organising a political community than the existing USA or Nigeria. Where the southern states and Biafra failed, others have succeeded, for example in the break up of the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire, and Brazil breaking away from Portugal. The point to grasp of this argument is that social institutions, including governments, are not fixed and static, that society is constantly under change and that governments like other social institutions are subject to change and open to challenge. The argument is that because sovereign states known as France or Malaya or Britain or Nigeria now exist, in which there are governments which claim the obedience of their subjects, this does not mean that these states will or *should* continue to exist for all time.

For the present, however, we can return to the question of how governments can offer protection to individuals. From the examples which have been given above, it will be obvious that if governments are to offer protection they must be backed up by force. They must be capable of meeting and overcoming any physical challenges to their authority which appear within the society. In countries which have enjoyed long periods of peace and tranquillity, the force which lies behind government may be submerged almost out of sight, but it must be there if the government is to ensure order. A good example of this is the trouble in Northern Ireland which will be examined in the television programme. The United Kingdom had enjoyed a long period of internal peace but the religious conflicts in Ulster broke the peace and the use of British troops was needed to restore order.

Not surprisingly definitions of government often refer to the force on which it is built. Robert Dahl defines *The Government* as "any government that successfully upholds a claim to the exclusive regulation of the legitimate use of force in enforcing its rules within a given territorial area" (Dahl, 1963, p. 12). Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell state "we agree with Max Weber that legitimate force is the thread that runs through the action of the political system" (Almond and Powell, 1966, p. 17).

It will be noted that both of these definitions speak not only of force (or physical coercion) but of *legitimate* force. This is an attempt to identify a particular 'right' which governments claim to use force, a right which is denied to any other individual or group within the society. There are those who would deny the basis of this claim. They would argue as the pirate did when Alexander the Great asked him what right he had to infest the seas: "The same right that you have to infest the world. But because I do it in a small boat I am called a robber while because you do it with a large fleet you are called an emperor." This view would tie in well with the challenges which as we mentioned appear in times of civil war, but it would be contested both by rulers like Alexander and by many political theorists. They would argue that government and law are inseparably connected, that government not only protects individuals but protects them within a framework of law, which lays down rights and obligations for the individual and for the government. The argument would probably be advanced even further to suggest that the protection of the individual can only be achieved within a structure of law and that it requires a government to create, administer and enforce this law. If we accept this argument, government does not therefore rest simply on naked force but becomes the upholder of a structure of law. We can advance this as a second major gain which it has been argued we derive from living under government.

3.2 Government Provides a Structure of Law and Seeks Legitimacy

Hobbes said that there could be no order and security without law and John Locke, our second 17th-century English writer, stressed this equally strongly. Locke, who like Hobbes, started by imagining man in a state of nature, argued that this 'state of nature' had been abandoned because it offered protection neither for the individual nor his property. There were, he said, three main things missing ('wanting') when men were not under government:

> First, There wants an established, settled, known law, received and allowed by common consent to be the standard of right and wrong, and the common measure to decide all controversies between them. For though the law of nature be plain and intelligible to all rational creatures, yet men,

> being biased by their interest, as well as ignorant for want of study of it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their particular cases.
>
> Secondly, In the state of nature there wants a known and indifferent judge, with authority to determine all differences according to the established law. For everyone in that state being both judge and executioner of the law of nature, men being partial to themselves, passion and revenge is very apt to carry them too far, and with too much heat in their own cases, as well as negligence and unconcernedness, make them too remiss in other men's.
>
> Thirdly, In the state of nature there often wants power to back and support the sentence when right, and to give it due execution. They who by any injustice offended, will seldom fail where they are able by force to make good their injustice. Such resistance many times makes the punishment dangerous, and frequently destructive to those who attempt it. (Locke, Second Treatise, Chapter IX, pp. 368–369.)

According to this argument, government brings with it a legal system giving rights as well as duties, defining limits within which government may operate, and giving equality of treatment. Law lays down limits of behaviour for ruler and ruled alike. It is built upon order so that the two are often bracketed together – 'law and order' – as though they are inseparable. From seeing Western films we all have an image of the American frontier in which "the law of the gun" (or "the law of the strongest and toughest") was gradually replaced by the government law which at least aimed at equality for all men, and an order which was patterned on a sense of rights and obligations.

Robert Bolt, in a very different piece of dramatic writing from the Westerns we have just mentioned, emphasised even more plainly the advantages which are derived from the existence of a structure of law. In his play *A Man for All Seasons* Bolt examined the dilemma of Sir Thomas More at the time of the reformation in England. More found that his allegiance to the monarch, Henry VIII, clashed with his belief that the Roman Catholic Church was the only true church. Those of you who saw the play or the film may remember a scene in which More and his family have been talking to a weak and untrustworthy character, Richard Rich. As soon as Rich leaves them, the other members of More's family urge Sir Thomas, as Chancellor, to arrest Rich because they rightly fear that Rich will betray More. In addition to More, the other people in the scene which follows are Alice, More's wife; Margaret, his daughter; and William Roper, an impulsive, emotional man who is later to marry Margaret.

Imagine the scene. Rich has just left. Sir Thomas and the others see plainly the dangers that lie ahead.

> ROPER: Arrest him.
> ALICE: Yes!
> MORE: For what?
> ALICE: He's dangerous!
> ROPER: For libel; he's a spy.
> ALICE: He is! Arrest him.
> MARGARET: Father, that man's bad.
> MORE: There is no law against that.
> ROPER: There is! God's law!
> MARGARET: Then God can arrest him.
> ROPER: Sophistication upon sophistication.
> MORE: No, sheer simplicity. The law, Roper, the law. I know what's legal, not what's right. And I'll stick to what's legal.
> ROPER: Then you set Man's law above God's!
> MORE: No, far below; but let me draw your attention to a fact – I'm *not* God. The currents and eddies of right and wrong, which you find

> such plain sailing, I can't navigate, I'm no voyager. But in the thickets of the law, oh there I'm a forester. I doubt if there's a man alive who could follow me there, thank God. (*He says this to himself.*)
>
> ALICE (*exasperated, pointing after* RICH): While you talk, he's gone!
>
> MORE: And go he should if he was the devil himself until he broke the law!
>
> ROPER: So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!
>
> MORE: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?
>
> ROPER: I'd cut down every law in England to do that.
>
> MORE (*roused and excited*): Oh? (*Advances on* ROPER.) And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you – where would you hide, Roper, the laws being flat? (*Leaves him.*) This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast – Man's laws, not God's – and if you cut them down – and you're just the man to do it – d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? (*Quietly*) Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake. (Bolt, 1963, pp. 38–9.)

The law, then, as More saw it, was our protection, like a cloak drawn around to keep out the bitter winds that threaten each individual.

So far, we have given an idealised view of the law. But it is not an abstract thing – it is a set of rules, regulations and orders. How are these made? What is the foundation on which law is based? These are some of the most fundamental of political questions. Some men have argued that the law is given by God as, for example, with the ten commandments; others that it is part of 'nature' – that there is a 'natural law' which again may have a divine origin; others have argued that the law is based on a contract between the rulers and the ruled which if one side breaks the other is no longer obliged to respect. But there are also men who argue strongly that the law is no more than a protection for the interests of those who are exercising power. It is impossible to pursue all these explanations here, but a brief look at the 17th-century doctrine of the 'divine right of kings' will help to demonstrate the importance of the issues which are raised. The doctrine of divine right was based on the general claim that political authority has a sacred character as revealed in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Chapter XIII.

> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
>
> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.
>
> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:
>
> For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. (Epistle to the Romans, xiii, 1–4.)

In England, the Stuart monarchs instead of accepting this as a recognition of a divine base for all political authority narrowed the claim to refer exclusively to monarchy. They said that monarchy was the best, perhaps the only form of government sanctioned by God, that monarchs could exercise absolute power and were accountable only to God for their actions. There is no need to emphasise the gulf that exists between this and the claims which were advanced by the Commons that the monarch must rule within the law, and that the law is based on the consent of the governed. It was arguments like this which were central to the great 17th-century constitutional conflict which led to the Civil War.

The close relationship between law and order is emphasised in revolutionary situations in which there is a breakdown of both. There was, however, a recent revolutionary situation in which law and order were apparently in conflict. This was the Rhodesian UDI. UDI was an illegal step. Even Mr. Smith admitted that. But Smith had ensured that the local armed forces would not challenge his step, and, as the British Government refused to take military action, Smith's regime retained order in the country. The situation posed a particular problem for the Rhodesian judiciary. As Mr. Smith's action had been unconstitutional and illegal, should the judges refuse to recognise Smith and his colleagues as Rhodesia's rulers, even though they were retaining order? Should they refuse to administer his laws? Should they even close the courts until the 'legal' authority was restored? At first the judges temporised. They said that to preserve order they would administer laws passed before UDI but they refused to recognise Mr. Smith either as *de facto* or *de jure* ruler and initially refused to administer any new law he passed. As time dragged on with Mr. Smith still preserving order, the judiciary gradually moved behind him. Step by step he was recognised as *de facto* and then *de jure* ruler. In this case law pursued order until the two were reconciled again.

Whatever the judges had decided Mr. Smith would have tried to hold on to power, but he was naturally delighted when the courts finally accepted his authority. He was delighted because, among other things, it increased his legitimacy. Again we return to this word *legitimacy* which all governments seek to achieve. It is a difficult concept to define precisely, but roughly it is the acceptance by those who are ruled that they 'ought' to obey, that their rulers have 'the right' to exercise power and claim their obedience.

Rulers seek legitimacy because of the strength it gives them. If they are accepted as legitimate, if their right to rule is unquestioned, then they can act without fear of challenge. They will not be faced with the dangerous expedient of relying on direct force to retain their position. In the Rhodesian example we are using, I am not suggesting that Mr. Smith's legitimacy was universally accepted after the courts' judgement. Far from it, for within Rhodesia many Africans refuse to accept the legitimacy of any exclusively white government, and so Mr. Smith and his fellow whites still have to rely on strong police and armed forces and such measures as imprisonment without trial. What the court judgement did was to increase Mr. Smith's legitimacy among some Rhodesians, and improve his chances of recognition by foreign governments.

Legitimacy is closely related to and often integrated with legality but, as the British found in Rhodesia, it does not rest on this alone. It needs other props to support it. One of these, as Hobbes would emphasise, is the ability of the rulers to maintain order. Other props to legitimacy may be provided by religious, traditional or ideological attitudes towards the rights of a particular ruling group.

3·3 By Living Under Government Men Can Gain Rights

If you look back to the first quotation from Hobbes, you will see that according to him without government there would be no culture, no navigation, no arts, for these are the fruits of an ordered society. Hobbes said that the price the individual had to pay for this was obedience to the ruler who could provide order. So far we have mainly been emphasising the 'order' side of government, the way in which government can give protection and security. Now let us turn to look at ideas about 'rights', 'freedom' and 'liberty'. These are, of course, very difficult words to define and individual ideas of what constitutes a 'right' or 'freedom' vary enormously. Ask yourself the question "Have I any rights?" Have you, for example, a right to worship as you please, to vote for a parliamentary candidate, to have your rubbish collected, to have state education for your children, to have equality before the law, to have your property protected by the police? If you think you have some of these rights then ask yourself "What is the source of these rights?" Do they, for example, come from laws created by the government or are there other sources of rights, such as God-given rights or 'natural' rights, which are not created by the government but which the government *should* recognise? If you think that the government is the source of rights, or the protector of rights, then this could be advanced as another advantage of living under government.

To take the derivation of rights further, you could ask whether individuals should enjoy similar rights irrespective of where they live or under what government they live. If this is the case then there must be universal rights. The rights you claimed for yourself should be enjoyed by people who live in Japan, Russia, Egypt and so on. Or perhaps you would argue that some rights are universal, for example the right to freedom of worship, while others are not, for example state education to the age of eighteen.

Questions of rights face governments as well as individuals. The South African Government has certainly faced them in its relations with other states. Ironically, it was General Jan Smuts, then Prime Minister of South Africa, who in 1945 drafted the resounding opening phrases of the United Nations Charter, which, among other things, affirms faith 'in fundamental human rights'. But what are fundamental human rights? Can they be defined and what is their source? Within a year of drafting the preamble, Smuts was defending his country against accusations that her racial policy was infringing fundamental human rights. Smuts was forced to argue that these rights could not be defined and that in any case racial and political equalities were not fundamental rights.

3·4 Liberty and the Development of Individual Talents Under Government

Some philosophers have advanced the claim that among the rights which a government should ensure is individual liberty: that this should be a major objective of good government. They may admit that liberty cannot be achieved without order, but at the same time they would argue that too many governments are prepared to sacrifice freedom for order. As extreme cases they would say that the order provided by rulers like Hitler and Stalin was certainly not worth the price that had to be paid, and there are many other less extreme cases in which the price also seems too high. What is the point, they would argue, of living under government if it removes all individual rights and leaves us with no choice, no initiative, nothing to do but obey? This moves us into the eternal debate of how to achieve a balance between liberty and order. Even when we accept that liberty should be an objective of government, where should the line be drawn? Should we, for example, allow demonstrations in the streets, and if we do, should we lay down regulations about how the demonstrations must be conducted? These and allied questions will be examined in the television programme by looking at the particular case of Northern Ireland.

John Stuart Mill, a 19th-century English political philosopher, was a famous advocate of individual liberty. Mill argued that in a society like 19th-century England the individual should be given the widest possible scope for personal initiative and decision. According to Mill, civilisation could not advance without individual liberty, for without it the search for new knowledge and new methods would be crushed under the weight of 'collective mediocrity'. Mill wrote:

> All the errors which a man is likely to commit against advice and warning are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain him to what they deem is good. (Mill, p. 73.)

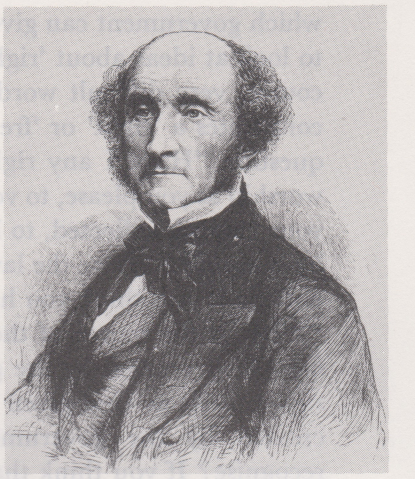

Figure 2.5 John Stuart Mill.

Despite Mill's constant suspicion of the range of government activity, despite his constant fear of authority suppressing liberty, he accepted that the conditions for individual liberty required the order provided by government. He might, as has been suggested, reduce the function of government to that of a night watchman or a traffic policeman, but he did not want to remove it entirely. He even argued that in some situations government should play a powerful, forceful rôle. 'Despotism', he wrote, 'is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind has become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion." (Mill, p. 73.)

Mill did not explain how we can recognise a state that is "capable of being improved by free and equal discussion" but he certainly assumed that this was the case for 19th-century England.

The rôle of government which he sketched in his essay 'On Liberty' was very limited. The aim was simply to provide the conditions in which individuals could flourish, in which tolerance and reason were supreme. The best government was almost the least government. In a later work 'Representative Government', Mill continued to accept the same limited rôle for government activity, but this time he argued that the individual could benefit government and himself by direct participation. The argument was that representative government gave the individual an opportunity to exercise his talents as well as the opportunity to defend his own interests. Mill wrote about 'popular' representative government:

> Its superiority in reference to present well-being rests upon two principles, of as universal truth and applicability as any general propositions which can be laid down respecting human affairs. The first is, that the rights and interests of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able, and habitually disposed, to stand up for them. The second is, that the general prosperity attains a greater height, and is more widely diffused, in proportion to the amount and variety of the personal energies enlisted in promoting it.
>
> Putting these two propositions into a shape more special to their present application; human beings are only secure from evil at the hands of others in proportion as they have the power of being, and are, self-*protecting*; and they only achieve a high degree of success in their struggle with Nature in proportion as they are self-*dependent*, relying on what they themselves can do, either separately or in concert, rather than on what others do for them. (Mill, p. 208.)

Similar claims to those of Mill have been advanced by campaigners for franchise rights during this century. Whether it has been suffragettes in England, black men in the United States, or Africans in

Rhodesia, one of the foundations for their claims has been that without the vote the individual was not a full citizen; he was denied the right to protect his interests and to exercise his full talent. The vote, according to this argument, gives not only a right to participate in government, but enhances the dignity and stature of those who enjoy it. Perhaps it is more forceful to put this argument in negative terms: to say that the denial of the vote is a denial of responsibility – decisions are made *for* you and not *by* you.

Mill himself was a great advocate of the vote for women in Britain. In advocating this he used the two main arguments we have noted above. First, that it would give women a form of protection and second that it would enhance the dignity of women and the respect in which they were held. He wrote:

> All human beings have the same interest in good government; the welfare of all is alike affected by it, and they have equal need of a voice to secure their share of its benefits. If there be any difference, women require it more than men, since, being physically weaker, they are more dependent on law and society for protection.
>
> People do not sufficiently consider how markedly the fact that she is able to have some action on the outward world independently of him (her husband) raises her dignity and value in a vulgar man's eyes, and makes her the object of respect. (Mill, p. 290.)

In Britain the campaign for votes for women was won in 1918 and the arguments which were used then against female franchise now seem ludicrous. Women, it was argued, were not political animals, the vote would unsex them and distract them from their proper function of looking after the home and children. Other arguments were that in voting women would simply accept whatever they were told by their husband or their church, and generally would be political innocents. These arguments now sound like museum pieces, but it is worth reflecting how recently they were live issues in many 'advanced' states. Women's suffrage was achieved nationally in America in 1920, although some states had introduced it earlier. In Britain, women over thirty were given the vote in 1918, and ten years later won equality with men. Women did not receive the vote until 1945 in France, 1946 in Italy and 1952 in Greece, and in 1970 in Switzerland they are still waiting for it.

Mill, in advocating female suffrage seems to be moving towards another dimension of liberty. This is what Sir Isaiah Berlin, a contemporary political philosopher, has called 'positive' liberty. Berlin, in his essay 'Two concepts of Liberty', first distinguishes 'negative' liberty which he says is the preservation of an area of individual action free from government interference. This would include such liberties as freedom of speech, of belief, of assembly, etc. It is a liberty which tells the government to keep out, not to trespass on our private preserve of liberty. According to Berlin, a clear distinction can be made between this and 'positive' liberty which grows from the desire to be our own masters. He wrote that 'positive' liberty was the "wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside" (Berlin, 1969, p. 131). In the same way that Mill thought that women gained not only greater security but also greater dignity and status from participation through the vote, Berlin argues that it is through active participation in government that we gain 'positive' liberties. In both these arguments the individual can, given the right form of government,

Fig. 2.6
'A woman's place'—a middle class image of the late 19th century.

Fig. 2.7
A suffragette arrested outside Buckingham Palace.

Fig. 2.8
Lady Astor, the first female to be elected to Parliament, after the declaration of the poll at Plymouth.

Fig. 2.9
A mother casts her vote in the 1918 *election, the first occasion on which women were allowed to vote.*
November 1919.

develop and expand himself. Government provides us not only with a defence but an opportunity to realise ourselves.

3·5 Only Through the State Can an Individual Gain an Identity

So far the emphasis has been upon the individual and what he may gain by living under government. The assumption has been that an individual, although always a member of a society, exists as a unit which can be identified and separated from society. Some political philosophers have argued that this is a misconception: that only as an integral part of society can an individual gain an identity. This is the 'organic' view in which the individual is an inseparable part of society, unable to divorce himself or his interests from society as a whole. Some philosophers would advance the argument even further to claim not only that the individual cannot be divorced from society, but that as a member of society he, the individual, is made greater than himself. It has been argued that it is as a part of a greater whole that the individual finds his 'true self'. This greater whole may be a tribe, a nation, a race or a religious group according to different view-points. In this approach, the social group forms the primary unit, while the individual is important only as a part of this unit.

Hegel, a 19th-century German philosopher, advanced such a claim. In particular, he emphasised the rôle of 'the nation state', and the identification of each individual with the state. He argued, using a particular interpretation of history, that the nation state was the highest form of social organisation, and that membership of the state was not a matter of individual choice, for there was no contracting in or contracting out. We are born into the state and it is the state which gives our lives meaning. Hegel wrote:

> It does not lie with an individual's arbitrary will to separate himself from the state, because we are already citizens of the state by birth. The rational end of man is life in the state, and if there is no state there, reason at once demands that one be founded. Permission to enter a state or leave it must be given by the state; this then is not a matter which depends on an individual's arbitrary will and therefore the state does not rest on contract, for contract presupposes arbitrariness. It is false to maintain that the foundation of the state is something at the option of all its members. It is nearer the truth to say that it is absolutely necessary for every individual to be a citizen. . .
>
> If the state is confused with civil society, and if its specific end is laid down as the security and protection of property and personal freedom, then the interest of the individuals as such becomes the ultimate end of their association, and it follows that membership of the state is something optional. But the state's relation to the individual is quite different from this. Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life. Unification pure and simple is the true content and aim of the individual, and the individual's destiny is the living of a universal life. His further particular satisfaction, activity, and mode of conduct have this substantive and universally valid life as their starting point and their result. (Hegel, trans. Knox, 1942, para. 75 and 258.)

Hegel's ideas are often viewed with hostility. First, because he developed arguments to extremes which seem reprehensible to many of us. For example, he argued that war had an 'ethical significance'. Second, because his ideas are said to have encouraged the emergence of totalitarian governments. Let us examine this second accusation a little further. The accusation goes that if, as Hegel argued, "unification pure and simple is the true content and aim of the individual", then the unifying force, the state, or more accurately those who

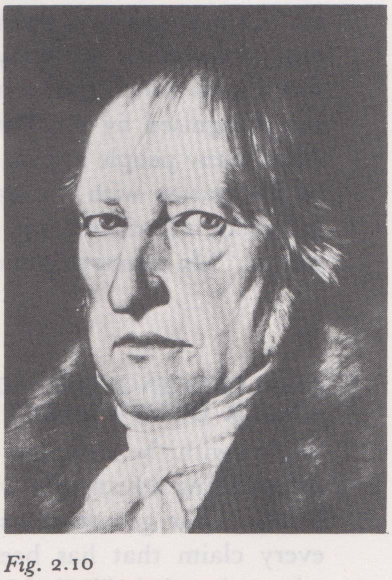

Fig. 2.10
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

control the state, can claim that all individuals and all their actions should be directed by the state and aimed at strengthening and advancing the state. According to this argument the individual may not realise where his 'true identity' lies and if he does not, the rulers would have every justification in directing and even forcing him towards his true ends. These are the ideas which, according to the accusors, have encouraged totalitarian government. Totalitarianism implies the control and direction of individual actions towards a set aim. Any claims to areas of individual liberty disappear, for all activity – political, social, economic, artistic, whatever it may be – must be directed towards the realisation of the ideal.

In particular, Hegel has been accused of planting the seeds of National Socialism in Germany, which grew into Hitler's racial, intolerant, tyrannical ideas. The accusors would say that there are shades of Hegel in Hitler's claim that "it is essential that the individual should slowly come to realise that his own ego is unimportant when compared with the existence of the whole people . . . above all he must realise that the freedom of the mind and will of a nation are to be valued more highly than the individual's freedom of mind and will" (Bullock, 1954, p. 365).

Had he been given the opportunity Hegel might well have protested that the accusations were false. Like other political philosophers he might have claimed that his ideas had been misrepresented. Marx once said that if the beliefs of some of his followers represented Marxism then he was not a Marxist. The misunderstanding may stem from ambiguous or contradictory writing, or from misreading of the argument, but it may also come from an inclination we all share to read our own ideas into those of other men. Hegel might have argued that because he had been given a bad name his ideas had been distorted and misinterpreted. Whether or not there is substance in the accusation levelled at Hegel, this does not, of itself, invalidate the 'organic' view of the individual and society. In fact, many of the claims made by modern states on the individual citizens appear to rest on an 'organic' view, and this is not only true of totalitarian states. The individual is given his identity as a member of a state. Within society he will have a series of loyalties – family, trade union, school, church, etc. – but the state demands the 'final' loyalty. Almost all states claim the right to summon citizens for service in the armed forces. Furthermore, a man who is actively disloyal to the state is branded as a traitor – the most serious of all crimes in the eyes of the state. A Philby might claim that he had loyalties to a social ideal which transcended the state, but this loyalty certainly is not recognised by the British Government or most British people. Also, many people appear to satisfy their personal need for identity by association with the state and its symbols, whether the symbols are a flag, a football team, or a leader who has been given a God-like image. "My country right or wrong" is not an uncommon sentiment.

4 CHALLENGING THE ADVANTAGES OF LIVING UNDER GOVERNMENT

So far, with the exception of the anarchists, we have concentrated on outlining advantages which political thinkers have advanced for living under governments. But it is possible to challenge almost every claim that has been made. Most political philosophers in advocating their ideals for what governments should be doing have been conscious that very often governments of their day have not been practising these ideals. The political philosopher has stood back and said: "Look, this is what you *should* be doing, but as far as I can see you are not doing it!" This does not imply that they supported the anarchists' view in rejecting all forms of government but rather that particular forms should be changed, or reformed, or replaced.

4.1 Government perpetuating Inequality and Injustice

Harold Laski, who was a leader of British socialist thinking in the first half of this century, stated that men have a duty to pass judgement on the government (state) under which they live. In examining the following passage which is taken from *A Grammar of Politics* we can draw on points which we have already noted. We can see, for example, that Laski rejects an organic view of the state or any claims to divine right by its rulers. Laski also accepts a challenge to the existing government and its order if it fails to satisfy 'our wants and desires'. He says "The State is not ourselves save where we identify ourselves with what it does." Laski wrote:

> The will of the State is subject to the scrutiny of all who come within the ambit of its decisions. Because it moulds the substance of their lives, they have the right to pass judgement upon the quality of its effort. They have, indeed, the duty so to pass judgement; for it is the plain lesson of the historic record that the wants of men will only secure recognition to the point that they are forcibly articulate. The State is not ourselves save where we identify ourselves with what it does. It becomes ourselves as it seeks to give expression to our wants and desires. It exerts power over us that it may establish uniformities of behaviour which make possible the enrichment of our personality. It is the body of men whose acts are directed to that end. Broadly, that is to say, when we know the sources from which governmental acts derive we know the sources of the State's will.
>
> But as those sources are not in themselves either good or bad, so the will of the State is in its nature morally neutral. It secures recognition from its members from a wide variety of causes. Some obey from conviction that the particular act is right. To others, the act arouses so feeble an emotion that indifference does not create the sense either of support or opposition. Others, as with the Education Act of 1902, actively oppose because they believe that the given act represents an abuse of power. What we are always given is a series of actions about which we have to make up our minds. The wills of those persons who form a government coalesce to make a decision; and that in its turn becomes the will of the State as it is translated into terms of daily administration. (Laski, 1967, pp. 35–6.)

Having established the 'duty' to judge the government Laski advanced criteria by which the judgement could be made. One of his criteria came out clearly when he wrote:

> If the State is known by the rights that it maintains, clearly it needs the power to maintain those rights. But there is always present the danger that a power which exists to secure good may, from its very strength, be used to frustrate it. Certainly the assurance of good intent is no longer adequate. Those who sit in the seat of government must be judged by their elevation of humble and ordinary men.

In this passage Laski has equated 'good' with the 'elevation of humble and ordinary men'. As he looked around the governments of the 1920s he decided that many of them were not promoting that good. Their failure, as Laski saw it, rested on the social order from which the government sprang and which in turn it defended. It was, according to him, a social order based on grave inequalities; inequalities of wealth and property, of opportunity and rights. Laski was particularly incensed that great wealth and property could be acquired by inheritance, by those who had done nothing to earn it and by those who lived as parasites on others. He wrote that the property owner "might be the fortunate descendant of a mistress of Charles II, to whom was given a royalty on all coal exported from the Tyne or he might be an outrageous moneylender who lived by extortion upon the unfortunate". (Laski, 1967, p. 174.)

A government that came from a society of inequality was frequently committed to preserving that society with all its inequalities and injustices. Laski thought that this came out in the law, and his view of the law contrasts with those Sir Thomas More advanced in Robert Bolt's play. In Laski's view, the law of the day was not a cloak to guard every individual, or at least not to guard every individual equally. Often it was a reflection of a particular social order and designed to protect that order. He wrote:

> Equality in justice is a primary condition of attaining justice; yet no one could even pretend to believe that it is obtained under the present system. That is true not only of criminal, but in civil cases also. The modern State maintains a vast organisation for the prosecution of alleged offenders; there is no such organisation to ensure their adequate defence. There is one law for the rich and another for the poor whenever the preparation of a defence is an item of importance in the case. Nor is that all, in the personal relations of life, as in divorce, for instance, lack of means generally implies lack of access to the courts. Often, also in civil cases the inability of a poor person to employ a counsel, still more to employ a really skilful counsel, is a fatal bar to their obtaining justice. Another region of inequality is notable. If a poor person steals, conviction follows rapidly; if a rich person steals, she is usually bound over on the plea of nervous trouble. If a taxi-driver is proved to have been drunk in charge of a car, he pays the penalty, but it is notorious that magistrates do not like to convict the rich young man in a similar position, since he will usually appeal and often get his case reversed on appeal. What is disorderly conduct in resisting the police in Whitechapel is not seldom regarded as an ebullience of high spirits in Mayfair. If directors of a company in high social position pay no attention to the affairs of the company, they are not held responsible when it is compulsorily liquidated; but if a petty official is confused in his accounts, charges of embezzlement are difficult to avoid. Clearly, we need to remedy such a state of affairs. In part, of course, we cannot remedy it by legislation, since, in part, the temper which is responsible for the position will change only as the social atmosphere changes. A magistrate who sees guilt in a poor thief, but nervous disease in a rich one, will continue to make the distinction until differences of economic status are negligible; a judge who does not believe that distinguished directors of public companies ought to be responsible for a negligence they are paid to prevent, will only find them responsible when there is a genuine relation between income and service. Wherever, in this aspect, differences in the administration of law are dependent, not upon the law itself, but upon the social results of the inequality of wealth, only a movement towards the equality of wealth can obliterate those differences. The situation here is only a particular of a much more generic problem. Things seem wicked in the poor which are not wicked in the rich; the rulers of civilization were horrified when Bolsheviks murdered aristocrats, but they were not horrified when aristocrats murdered Bolsheviks. . . . The temper, in fact, which permits the English peer a special trial by the House of Lords will only disappear with the abolition of the privileges typified by the House of Lords. (Laski, 1967, pp. 565–6.)

The view which emerges in Laski is that governments may not be organised for the advantage of all men but merely for those who already enjoy privilege and authority. This is a view which has been advanced by critics of particular governments throughout the ages. It is found widely today among such different people as democrats in the USSR, African nationalists in Southern Africa, radical students in France, and Black Power leaders in the USA. If they were asked what they gained from their governments they would answer: "Nothing but oppression and restriction."

Although, excluding the anarchists, the main criticism of government activity which has been quoted is that of Harold Laski, a suspicion of particular governments is found among almost all political philosophers, including those we have used to suggest possible advantages of living under government. John Stuart Mill, for example, could have been quoted as a critic of government, for while he could see that given certain conditions individual liberty could flourish under government, he was very conscious that these conditions were often absent. Equally, Laski could have been quoted for the advantages he saw in living under a socialist government rather than for the disadvantages he saw in the capitalist society of Britain in the 1920s.

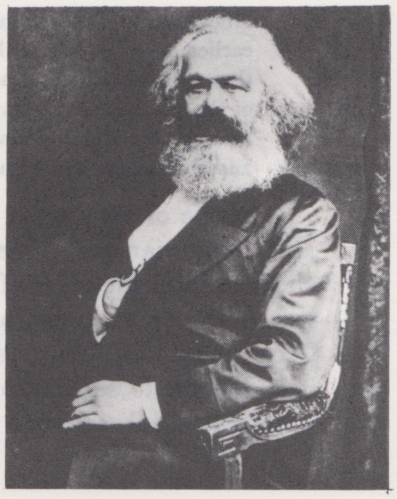

Figure 2.11 Karl Heinrich Marx.

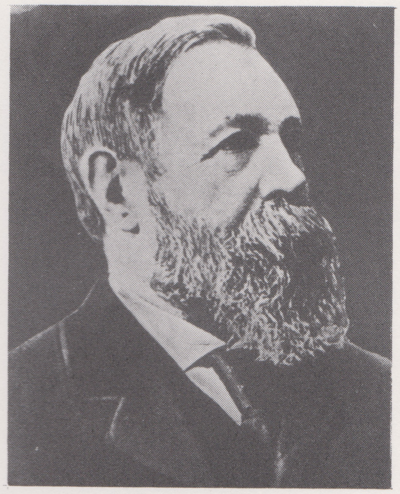

Figure 2.12 Friedrich Engels.

4.2 The State as an Instrument of Class Oppression

Political philosophers cannot be divided simply between those who are for or against governments in general. Usually distinctions rest on their attitudes towards particular forms of government, and the variety of ideas among them about what the ideals should be has often led to bitter controversy. Their aim is usually to judge whether the existing government is satisfactory or whether it should be improved and if it is to be improved in what way, but some political philosophers have been so dissatisfied with the existing social and government structures that they have advocated a complete reordering of society and government. This was the case with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In advocating the development towards a communist state they spoke out for the overthrow of existing capitalist governments, and in doing so wrote the most famous of all anti-government blasts. Like Hegel they looked back into history to develop their theory of economic and social development, but unlike him they concluded that government was a class conspiracy designed to uphold the power and privileges of the ruling class against other classes. Because of their conviction they saw their aims as different from those of earlier political philosophers. Marx wrote: "All philosophers have sought to explain the world; the point, however, is to change it." They preached that when, after long days of struggle, the classless society emerged, the need for government would wither away. Like the Troglodytes, the virtue of those who remained would be such that the coercive powers of the state would no longer be required. Engels wrote:

> As the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but as it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slaveowners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital.
>
> The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no conception of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity, owing to this cleavage. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive

> hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. The society that will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe. (Engels, ed. Feuer, 1969, pp. 431–2.)

It is one of life's great ironies that some of the most formidable and totalitarian government structures have been built by men who claim to fulfil the ideas of Marx and Engels. Even if we are able to see some common characteristics in Montesquieu's myth of the Troglodytes and Marx's and Engels' dream of the classless society, it is difficult to see Stalin or Mao Tse Tung filling the rôle of the venerable old Troglodyte who refused to accept power.

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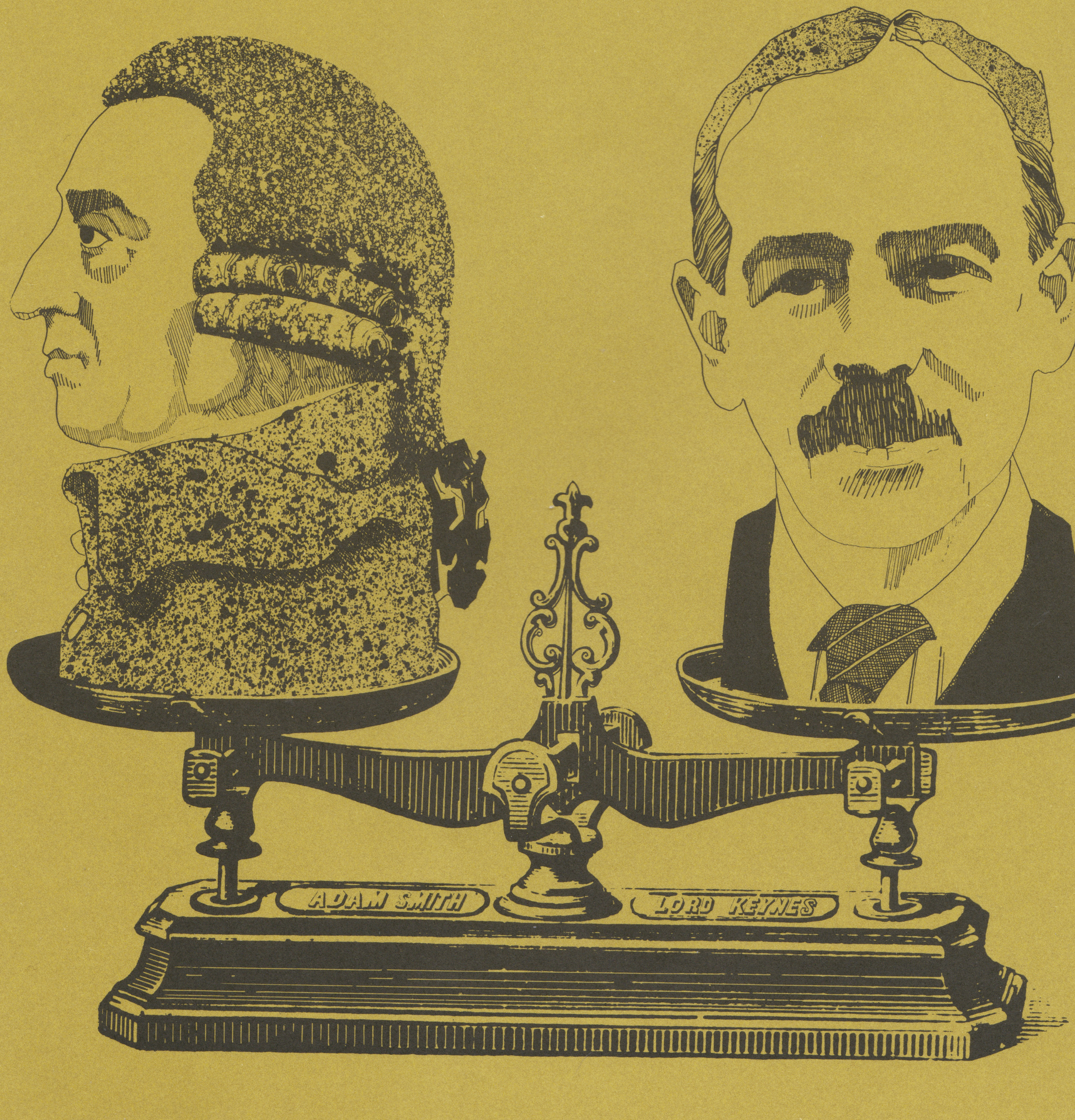
Unit 3

The Economic Basis of Society


ADAM SMITH
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CONTENTS UNIT 3

PAGE

1 INTRODUCTION 63

2 THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM 63

3 ECONOMICS AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE 64

4 SPECIALISATION AND EXCHANGE 66

5 A NUMERICAL EXAMPLE 67

6 THE LIMITS OF SPECIALISATION 69

7 SPECIALISATION, CAPITAL AND THE FIRM 70

8 MONEY AND MARKETS 72

9 THE 'MARKET ECONOMY': LIMITATIONS 74

10 THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY 78

11 PLANNING, MARKETS AND THE 'MIXED' ECONOMY 81

12 THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY 82

BIBLIOGRAPHY 84

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF SOCIETY

1 INTRODUCTION

The first two units have outlined the psychological and political factors which bring human beings together in societies. But even if these factors did not exist, mankind would still be led to form societies for *economic* reasons: social co-operation makes it possible to expand the production of goods and services, and therefore the level of consumption, far beyond the level that could be reached if everyone tried to be self-sufficient. In some environments, in fact, this kind of co-operation is necessary merely to ensure survival.

2 THE 'ECONOMIC PROBLEM'

In Unit 1, human needs were briefly described; they range from 'biological' requirements such as nourishment and warmth, to 'learned' needs which people acquire through living in particular societies. But not all of these needs can be described as 'economic', in the sense that they can be satisfied only by using productive resources which are *scarce* relatively to the calls which are made on them. Consider, for example, the fact that a certain intake of air is essential to life. Obviously, this is a vital need. But it is not an economic one, because air is so abundant that everyone can take, quite freely, as much as he wants; there is no need to make arrangements for producing it, or for rationing its use in any way; it is what is called a 'free good'. Other needs, by contrast, call for the use of labour-power, land, machinery and other man-made means of production, which exist in amounts which are not large enough to produce as much food, clothing, housing and so forth, as everyone could possibly want. **When the output of any commodity calls for the use of resources which are scarce in this sense, it is an '*economic* good'.**

The example of *air* provides another contrast with most economic goods. It is a 'need' in the simple and unambiguous sense that a certain minimum intake is essential to life; and though it is possible to exceed this minimum, the maximum amount it is physically possible to breathe is not very much greater. So the amount of air every individual requires for survival and well-being is predictable within fairly narrow limits.[1] But many other things are not strictly necessary for survival at all, so that there is no *minimum* requirement; one can go on living without beer, or tea, or whisky, as long as water or some other liquid is available instead. On the other hand, the *maximum* possible consumption of such goods (per day, month or year) may be quite high. Even though they are not essential to maintain life, these goods certainly contribute to the individual's well-being: the greater the amount consumed, the greater the degree of well-being which is generated – though this will be subject to a maximum where the consumer reaches the point of complete satiation. In these cases, it is not possible to define 'need' in terms of a particular *quantity* of a given commodity, because this would be equivalent to saying that a certain level of well-being is somehow 'right' for the individual: for example, to assert that the average consumer 'needs' two loaves of bread per week is to imply that the degree of well-being he derives from this level of consumption is in some sense 'right' for him, in spite of the fact that his total well-being would be greater still if he were to have three loaves instead of two. But economists generally avoid the kind of 'value judgements' which take the form of saying how much people *ought* to consume. So instead of speaking of 'needs', they use the word '*wants*'. They assume that individuals wish to enjoy as much well-being as possible, and that if a consumer's intake of bread, beef or any other commodity falls short of the level of complete satiety, he will want to have more of it. If productive resources are not available in large enough quantities to satisfy *all* wants to the 100 per cent satiety point, it is possible to have more of any particular commodity only at the cost of having less of something else – so that to satisfy consumers' wants for (say) beef to a higher degree, resources will have to be directed from producing (say) wheat, and consumers' desires for wheat products will be less fully satisfied than they had been previously.

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[1] This way of putting things, it must be admitted, is very much an over-simplification from the physiologist's point of view; respiration varies a good deal between individuals and according to the activities in which people are engaging. For the purposes of the present argument, however, these complications are ignored here.

'Economic' goods, then, are those for which people's wants exceed the output of the scarce resources which are needed to produce them. Their existence gives rise to a number of problems of *choice*. The first of these is, which goods shall be produced, and in what quantities? If the community cannot simultaneously have as much beef *and* as much wheat as everyone wants, how should resources be allocated between them? Should the output of beef be made large, and that of wheat small – or vice versa? Or should resources be divided equally between the two? A second – and subsidiary – problem is, *how* should the various commodities be produced? It is possible, for example, to cultivate wheat 'intensively' by using a great deal of labour and relatively little land, or 'extensively' by using much land and little labour. Which method to employ is part of the general problem of resource-allocation. Thirdly, there is the problem of distributing the output of the scarce resources between the members of the community. Should everyone be given an equal share? Should the division depend on each individual's contribution to the process of production? Should output be shared out in accordance with what people are prepared to pay? Or should it be done in some purely traditional manner?

These three basic problems – what to produce, how to produce it, and who is to get it – must somehow be solved in every kind of economic system. Even Robinson Crusoe (who could be described as a 'one-man economy') could not avoid the first two of these questions, and after he was joined by Man Friday they had to face the third question as well. In a society the size of our own, the dimensions of the problems are very much larger, but in principle they are exactly the same. The methods of solving them may differ from one society to another – for example, as between the United States and the Soviet Union – but the basic questions are common to all.

3 ECONOMICS AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE

Economics, as a social science, is therefore concerned with problems of resource-allocation where the resources are scarce relatively to the possible uses that can be made of them; and economists have followed two lines of approach

to their subject-matter. The first is merely to observe and elucidate the ways in which societies do, in fact, allocate scarce resources between different lines of production and distribute the resulting output between individuals. The investigation of what is actually happening, without regard to the question of whether it is in some sense 'desirable' or not, is known as **'positive' economics.** It assumes that people (and also business firms, governments, trade unions and other organisations) have *goals* of various kinds, and tries to discover how they go about achieving them. The goals are themselves matters of investigation – do people aim chiefly at getting the largest possible level of consumption? Or do they try to minimise their input of labour – i.e., to enjoy as much leisure as they can? Or do they prefer to continue traditional arrangements with as little change as possible, even though these may apparently fail to satisfy their wants for commodities to the full extent that could be attained if their customs were relaxed? Whatever the social goal (or goals, since there is no reason why a community may not aspire to more than one, even if they are mutually incompatible), it is not the economist's business to criticise them; his rôle is merely to see how, in fact, the community tries to attain them.

But to observe the way in which goals *are* pursued is bound, in the nature of things, to suggest ways in which they might be more efficiently realised; and economists do, in fact, devote a great deal of effort to seeking ways in which scarce resources can be employed more effectively in terms of goal-attainment. If no special aim is laid down, they normally assume that resources should be allocated in such a way as to satisfy wants to the highest degree attainable within the limits imposed by the availability of resources. To assume that an increase in well-being is always desirable is in itself a value judgement – an *ethical* presumption which goes beyond the limits of 'positive' analysis: like all statements dealing with what ought to be rather than what is, it is a 'normative' proposition, and the analysis which traces the implications of such propositions is 'normative analysis'. In principle, however, the assumption that satisfaction ought to be maximised is the only value judgement that economists usually make on their own initiative; they do not, for example, attempt to discriminate between particular wants or particular uses of resources, by assuming that it is always better (say) to build dwelling-houses than office-blocks, or that everyone should patriotically 'buy British', or that records of classical music are inherently 'better' than 'pop' and should therefore be given priority in production. At the same time, it must be admitted that economists have their private likes and dislikes just like other people, and that these may sometimes distort their judgements; also, the fact that statistical data may be hard to obtain, and that the analysis of particular questions is often very difficult and complicated, may lead economists to disagree among themselves on questions of public policy even though all are arguing in good faith.

Because the fundamental 'economic problem' is a matter of the scarcity of resources *relatively* to wants, it is conceivable – in principle, anyway – that it might sometime be eliminated altogether. For this to happen, the amount and productivity of resources would have to grow more rapidly than the wants their output is intended to satisfy. At the end of the process, the input of labour would be no greater than people were prepared to render for its own sake, in much the same way as anglers catch fish purely for sport, and gardeners grow roses and marrows as a hobby; but this minimal labour input would be employed to operate a vast mass of machinery and other forms of capital equipment, whose productivity had become so great as to make all forms of output sufficiently abundant to allow all consumers to have whatever they wanted up to the point of complete satiety. But this would require two conditions – first, that world population did not grow so fast that gains in total output were merely offset by a growth in the number of consumers; and second, that each individual consumer's wants did not grow so fast as to stay ahead of the increasing productivity of resources. The current 'population explosion' makes it unlikely that the first condition will be met unless present trends are unexpectedly reversed. As for the second condition, the problem is that technological advances which increase productivity tend also to be matched by the invention of new consumer goods, such as television and the motor-car, which create new wants which had not even existed before. Improved communications, making people in less developed regions aware of the higher living standards enjoyed by the richer ones, raise the level of the former's aspirations – to say nothing of the effects of commercial advertising aimed at creating demands which might not otherwise have existed at all. If wants could somehow be reduced, or even stabilised, it is conceivable that the 'economic problem' might be solved within a few generations[1] – but as things are, it would be very optimistic to predict that it will be eliminated within a very long time, if ever.

4 SPECIALISATION AND EXCHANGE

If the purpose of economic activity is assumed to be the satisfaction of wants to the largest possible extent, it will be in everyone's interest to use the available resources as productively as possible. This is where the possibilities of social co-operation come into the picture. At the simplest level, such co-operation may mean no more than combining several people's muscle-power to move heavy logs and stones to build houses and bridge streams; hunting together, pooling information about animal spoors, and so on. But it does not require much further development for the principle of *division of labour* to start being applied. Instead of each individual doing everything for himself, and being by turns a farmer, a smith, a cobbler, a weaver and so on, those whose talents make them particularly productive in one field come to specialise in it, exchanging most or all of their output against the goods produced by other specialists. By concentrating on a single activity, an individual greatly increases his dexterity and skill in it; he does not lose time in changing from one occupation to another; it becomes worth his while to devise and use special tools, and he has both the opportunity and the incentive to think of better ones.

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[1] Britain's most distinguished economist of the 20th century, J. M. (later Lord) Keynes, said in 1930: "Assuming no important wars and no important increase in population, the *economic problem* may be solved, or be at least within sight of solution, within a hundred years. This means that the economic problem is not—if we look into the future—*the permanent problem of the human race*. For the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem—how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares . . . to live wisely, agreeably and well." ('Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren', *Essays in Persuasion*, pp. 366–7, Macmillan, 1931.) Unfortunately, the assumptions made in Keynes' first sentence have not been fulfilled.

The concept of the 'economic problem' also throws light on the slogan by which Marxists have characterised the 'ultimate stage of communism'—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need". If 'need' is determined by each individual for himself, and includes the satisfaction of his desire for leisure as well as for goods and services, it can be seen that the 'ultimate stage' presupposes the disappearance of the 'economic problem' itself.

A 'division of labour' of a simple kind exists in the family: in our own society, the man is usually the breadwinner and the wife the housekeeper – though it is worth noting that there are many other cultures in which these rôles are allocated differently. In a fairly self-sufficient farm household comprising an 'extended' family – i.e. grandparents, uncles and cousins as well as parents and children – specialisation could be carried much further, with one member looking after the cattle, another the poultry, yet another spinning and weaving cloth, and so on. Even in this case, however, there will be some products, such as needles, bicycles and tropical fruit, which the family must either obtain from outside or go without; to get these things, it must exchange some of its own products for them. Indeed, it will find that there are certain things which, even though it *can* produce them for itself, are more profitably acquired by exchange with other households.

5 A NUMERICAL EXAMPLE

This can be shown by a very simple hypothetical example. Suppose the Brown family, in addition to producing all their own food, also make their own shoes and weave their own cloth. If all the time and effort not needed for food production were devoted wholly to shoemaking, they could turn out twenty pairs of shoes a year; if they were to concentrate wholly on cloth-weaving, they could produce 100 yards of cloth a year; alternatively, they could divide their efforts between the two commodities, so as to produce (for example) ten pairs of shoes plus fifty yards of cloth, or five pairs of shoes plus seventy-five yards of cloth. These figures, it will be noticed, imply a 'productivity ratio' of 1 to 5; that is, the resources needed to make one pair of shoes could alternatively produce five yards of cloth if they were not used for shoemaking. This is also known as the 'transformation ratio'. (Another way of describing the relationship is to say that the 'opportunity cost' of a pair of shoes is in this case five yards of cloth, since the opportunity of producing the latter quantity is given up when resources are used to produce a pair of shoes instead.) The exact ratio, of course, depends on the way the family's skills are adapted to producing the two commodities, and also on the other resources they possess. Their neighbours, the Greens, though capable of producing the same two commodities, may have quite a different ratio – say 1 to 3 as between shoes and cloth; *total* production, however, will depend on their total resources in terms of labour-power and equipment, and it will be supposed that these are such that the Greens could produce *either* thirty pairs of shoes *or* ninety yards of cloth, *or* any of the possible in-between combinations such as twenty pairs of shoes plus thirty yards of cloth. To begin with, let production be as follows:

	SHOES (PAIRS)	CLOTH (YARDS)
Browns	10	50
Greens	15	45
TOTAL	25	95

It is obvious that if each family were now to specialise, with the Browns producing *only* cloth and the Greens *only* shoes, total production would be increased to 100 yards of cloth and thirty pairs of shoes; all that is necessary is for the two families to decide how much of their output to exchange with one another, and on what terms. Suppose they agree to barter one pair of shoes for four yards of cloth, and that on these terms the Browns wish to have twelve pairs of shoes, and the Greens forty-eight yards of cloth. The result will be as follows:

	SHOES (PAIRS)		CLOTH (YARDS)	
	Produced	*Consumed*	*Produced*	*Consumed*
Browns	0	12	100	52
Greens	30	18	0	48
TOTAL	30	30	100	100

By giving up forty-eight yards of cloth, the Browns obtain twelve pairs of shoes on the one-to-four exchange ratio; if they had produced shoes at home instead, they would have had only $9\frac{3}{5}$ pairs, since their one-to-five 'productivity ratio' means that they could produce only that number with the same expenditure of time and effort as was needed to produce the forty-eight yards of cloth. The Greens, on the other hand, could have made the forty-eight yards of cloth for themselves only by foregoing the production of sixteen pairs of shoes, since this is the 'cost' of the cloth in terms of their own one-to-three productivity ratio. As long as the Browns can get shoes by giving less than five yards of cloth in exchange for a pair, and as long as the Greens can get more than three yards of cloth for a pair of shoes, it will pay them both to specialise and trade with one another; and it can be seen from the table that each family ends up consuming more of both goods as a result.

It should be noted that nothing at all has been said about the two families' productivity in the *absolute* sense, i.e. in terms of the *total* resources used to make the commodities. The Browns' productivity ratio would still be 1 to 5 whether it took them ten hours of work to produce a yard of cloth and fifty to make a pair of shoes, or twenty and 100 hours respectively, or fifty and 250. Similarly, whether the Greens need five hours to turn out a yard of cloth and fifteen to produce a pair of shoes, or ten and thirty, or twenty and sixty, it will still be true that the making of a pair of shoes is equivalent, in terms of resources used up, to making three yards of cloth. Suppose the situation were as follows:

HOURS NEEDED TO PRODUCE

	1 pair of shoes	*1 yard of cloth*
Browns	50	10
Greens	15	5

In this case it is clear that the Greens are more efficient in producing *both* commodities: if each family has the same equipment (in the form of looms, lasts, etc.) the difference in hours must be due to superior skill on the Greens' part. Yet it will still pay them to specialise on shoe production and obtain cloth by exchange with the Browns. The point is that though the Greens are more efficient than the Browns in cloth production, they are still *more* efficient in making shoes, and the possibility of exchange allows them to concentrate on the product in which their relative efficiency is greater. (Another way of putting it is to say that the Greens have a lower 'opportunity cost' than the Browns in shoe production, and should therefore concentrate on their lowest-cost product.) The same principle can be applied to international trade, to show why a country may import commodities which it can itself produce more efficiently than do those from which it buys, and to show that a country may still be able to export even though its productivity is lower in all fields than that of its customers; in this context, it is known as the 'theory of comparative advantage', and it has traditionally been used to advocate free trade, on the ground that the use of tariffs to discourage specialisation is tantamount to reducing the economy's overall productivity.

6 THE LIMITS OF SPECIALISATION

The degree of specialisation could be increased by bringing additional families into the system and letting them specialise on commodities of their own: for example, another family – the Whites – might concentrate on making cheese, and another – the Blacks – on beer, so that a four-cornered pattern of exchange becomes possible; also, the production of each item may be split up into sub-processes, so that instead of the Browns carrying on the whole business of cloth-making from sheep rearing to weaving and dyeing, *several* families might undertake the successive stages of production, one providing raw wool for the next to spin, the latter passing the yarn to a family which concentrates wholly on weaving, and so on. There will, however, be a point beyond which specialisation ceases to be profitable. Suppose another family – the Greys – are particularly skilful in making clocks, but have only four other families with which to trade them. If they specialise wholly on clock-making, their output will greatly exceed the requirements which the other families were originally satisfying by their own efforts. It is true that the Greys can afford to supply their clocks more cheaply (in the sense that they will accept less cloth, shoes, etc., than the other families would lose by diverting their resources to clock production), and this will increase the demand for them; but if the demand still falls short of the Greys' output even when the terms of exchange have fallen to the level of their own 'productivity ratio' (so that they can get no more cloth in exchange for a clock than they could have produced for themselves with the resources needed to make a clock), there will be no point in their specialising completely on this line of production. Indeed, if they were to reduce their terms of exchange to a level low enough to ensure that their whole output is demanded, they will be obtaining *less* cloth, shoes, etc., than they could have had by producing these things for themselves. **To make specialisation worthwhile, the market for a commodity must be large enough to absorb the specialist producers' output on favourable terms.**

The size of the market depends partly on the geographical proximity of buyers and sellers, partly on the cost of transporting goods between them, and partly on information – potential buyers must know what goods are being offered, and on what terms. One of the most striking developments in the last two centuries has been the continuous expansion of markets, so that (for example) a few large firms, located in a small number of centres such as Northampton and Street, now produce footwear for the whole of Britain, in place of the very numerous small shoemakers who at one time supplied the needs each of his own village or small town. Very many markets, indeed, are now international.

7 SPECIALISATION, CAPITAL, AND THE FIRM

As markets grow, and the opportunities for specialisation increase, it becomes possible – and profitable – to split up the business of production into more and more detailed sub-processes. A well-known early example is that given by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). He described the method of manufacturing steel pins in a small factory. The process was divided into eighteen distinct operations, carried out by ten people who between them produced more than forty-eight thousand pins a day. If each of the ten workers had been set to produce complete pins from start to finish on his own, their combined output would have been only a small fraction of that number.[1] Nowadays, of course, manufacturing processes have been refined and rationalised into far more detailed operational stages than in Smith's 18th-century example. The production of a motor-car, for example, involves several thousand separate sub-processes: as the car passes down the assembly-line, workers successively carry out operations each of which may be quite small in itself, but which, when joined together in sequence, are capable of turning out hundreds of thousands of cars in a year. A great deal of industrial output is now produced by mass-production methods which carry the division of labour to lengths far greater than Adam Smith ever envisaged. The more refined it becomes – that is, the larger the number of separate elements into which the manufacturing process is divided – the easier it is to substitute machinery for labour in sub-processes which have been reduced to simple repetitive actions. But whether it is profitable to do so depends on the rate of output. Suppose a given process could be carried out in its entirety by a machine costing £10,000; if the machine takes ten years to wear out, its *annual* cost will be roughly[2] £1,000, and if its annual output is 1,000 units of the product, the machine-cost per unit will be £1. But if the demand for the product at any price above £1 happens to be only 500 units a year – or if, to sell the full 1,000 units, it would be necessary to reduce the product's selling-price below £1 – the machine will obviously not be worth installing; and if the 500 units can be produced by human labour at a wage-cost of less than £1 a unit, the process will continue to be carried on by human labour instead of being mechanised.

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[1] See item in the *Reader* (p. 41).

[2] This kind of calculation is in practice more complicated than the simple arithmetical example suggests; in this case, accountants would arrive at a rather different figure. Hence the word 'roughly' in the text.

As capital equipment[1] becomes cheaper and more productive, and as the demand for commodities grows, manufacturing processes tend to increase in scale and to become more and more mechanised; it is no longer possible for a single worker or family to undertake the production of a whole commodity, as the Greens and Browns did in the hypothetical example given earlier. But only an extremely rich individual could afford to own an entire steelworks or a whole oil refinery, and even then he might doubt the wisdom of putting all his eggs into one basket – a sudden fall in the demand for steel or oil could ruin him. And even if a large enterprise such as a steelworks *were* owned by a single person or family, it would certainly be necessary to employ a large number of other people to work in it, and some kind of organisation would be needed to control the system of production and to market the output.

This organisation might take the form of a *company*, which owns and operates the capital equipment used in the production process, and employs the workers who provide the necessary labour; it buys the raw materials and sells the finished product. In turn, the company is itself owned by shareholders whose dividends depend on how much profit the company makes; they appoint the directors who manage the company's affairs, and have the ultimate decision on major policy questions. But the organisation could alternatively be a partnership, or a co-operative society, or an autonomous public body like the National Coal Board; in the Soviet Union, it would be a 'factory enterprise' or even a collective farm (*kolkhoz*). **The essential feature of all these different entities is that they provide for the joint ownership of enterprises which use quantities of physical capital operated collectively by a large number of workers, and are run by managers whose aim is to make profits, or at any rate avoid losses.[2]** It will be convenient, for the moment, to refer to them all as '*firms*', in spite of the many differences of detail which exist among them.

The process of specialisation and exchange will now take the following form. Instead of producing exchangeable commodities from start to finish on a small scale, the Browns, the Greens and the other families will send some of their members out to work for firms of various kinds; their specialisation will consist in the performing of particular kinds of labour services. Instead of directly owning physical capital of their own (like the looms which the Browns operated in the earlier example) they will hold their wealth in the form of shares in firms, or perhaps in bonds or money – though of course, there are many individuals and families who *do* still own physical capital in small businesses, shops and farms. In their turn, the firms which organise the production of commodities (each, of course, specialising in a particular good, or a group of related ones) sell their output for money, with which they are able to pay their workers, buy materials from other firms, and distribute dividends to their shareholders; while the customers who buy the various commodities will, for the most part, be doing so with the money the firms have paid out to them in wages and dividends.[1] So a man who puts in a week's work in return for a money-wage, and uses it to buy food and clothing, pay the rent, and so on, is exchanging his specialised output of labour service for the specialised outputs of other members of the community – except that he is doing so indirectly through the medium of *money*.

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[1] 'Capital', in this physical sense, includes all durable means of production, such as machines, buildings, railway rolling stock, ships, oil refineries and so on. But the word has a purely financial sense as well—it can mean a holding of company shares, or of bonds, or even a sum of money. It is very important not to confuse the two. Until further notice, 'capital' will be used only in the physical sense.

[2] In the Communist countries, managers usually have other objectives laid down for them as well: for example, they may have to achieve a planned output in physical terms, as well as balancing their books in the financial sense.

8 MONEY AND MARKETS

This assumes, of course, that some kind of money is already in existence and is circulating round the economy to allow all these transactions to take place. But the institution of money itself involves a number of important questions. To begin with, there are several *kinds* of money. As well as coins and banknotes, there is 'bank money' – that is, the credit balances of bank customers from which payments can be made by cheque. Still other kinds of money have been used by various communities in the past – bars of silver, lumps of copper, cowrie shells and even cattle have at one time or another been used as means of payment. Then there is the question of who is to provide the money, and in what quantities. If a community's money consisted entirely of gold or silver coins, its total quantity would depend on how much had been mined in the past or acquired from other countries in exchange for exports. Paper currency, on the other hand, is issued by governments and banks, while 'bank money' is provided by the banking system, over which governments have direct or indirect methods of control. So when the amount of money in circulation can be determined as a matter of official policy, the government must somehow decide how much of it there ought to be, and how the total amount ought to change over time.

When money has come into use, the ratios in which commodities exchange for one another are indicated by their respective prices. If cloth is £1 a yard, and shoes £4 a pair, the price-relationship is the equivalent of the 'exchange ratio' which prevailed when the Browns and Greens were bartering one pair of shoes for four yards of cloth. Similarly, a price of 5p. for a bar of chocolate, and of 25p. for a packet of cigarettes, would imply a five-to-one exchange-ratio between the two commodities. However, the same ratios would hold if cloth and shoes were respectively £2 a yard and £8 a pair, and if chocolate and cigarettes were priced at 10p. a bar and 50p. a packet; or if the price of the four commodities were £5, £20, 25p. and £1.25. The same set of *relative* prices can exist at any level of *absolute* prices ('absolute', that is, in terms of the actual number of pounds and pence charged for the commodity). But the higher the absolute prices of the various goods and services which are being exchanged within the economy at any given time, the larger the quantity of money which will be required to effect all these transactions; and there is some justification for arguing the converse – i.e., that the larger the quantity of money actually available, the higher the level of absolute prices will be. This is, however, a complicated question which cannot be discussed in detail at this stage (it will be considered more fully in Unit 15); but it indicates the importance of the government's powers of control over the monetary system, since a rapid and persistent increase in absolute prices – i.e., *inflation* – has been a serious problem for many countries in the last few decades.

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[1] This ignores a number of complications for the sake of simplicity. For example, some consumers will be pensioners who are not currently involved in the production process, and whose incomes are provided by the state—which will have obtained the money by taxing workers, shareholders and the firms themselves. Other people will be receiving interest on government bonds, and still others will be government officials whose incomes arise from services rendered to the state.

Whatever the *general* level of prices happens to be, the prices of individual commodities will be determined by *supply and demand* if all individuals and firms are free to buy and sell whatever they want and can afford. The economy will consist of a set of *markets* for the various goods and services available: markets for finished products such as bread and beer; markets for 'intermediate' goods, such as steel plates, which are used in making other things; markets for services, such as the various types of labour; and markets for houses, land, second-hand goods of all kinds, and financial assets such as company shares and government bonds.

In general, the lower the price that is asked for anything, the larger the quantity of it that people will want to buy (the **'demand'**); for example, the buyers' response to prices in the market for good 'A' may be like this:

Price (pence per unit)	30	25	20	15	10
Quantity demanded (thousand units per day)	100	120	150	190	250

On the other hand, the quantity the producers wish to sell (**the 'supply') will, in general, be greater, the higher the price** – as in this table:

Price (pence per unit)	30	25	20	15	10
Quantity supplied (thousand units per day)	200	180	150	100	50

The lower the price, the fewer the firms that will be able to cover costs in producing the commodity – in fact, there will be some price-level at which none will find it worthwhile to undertake production at all; the higher the price, however, the more firms will be drawn by the prospect of profit into producing good 'A', and the larger the output of firms already in the market. But the quantity supplied must balance the quantity demanded. If, initially, the price happened to be 25p., the tables show that producers would be trying to sell 180,000 units of 'A' per day, while consumers would be wanting to buy only 120,000. Rather than be left with unsold stocks on their hands, the firms which can afford to take less than 25p. per unit will reduce their selling-prices, and as price is reduced, more customers will become willing to buy – until the two sides of the market balance at a price of 20p. Similarly, if prices were initially 15p., so that demand exceeded supply by 90,000 units, the shortage would encourage existing firms to increase their selling-prices; as they did so, new firms would enter the market, and consumers would cut down their demand, until an '*equilibrium*' of supply and demand was reached at 20p.

When similar positions of 'equilibrium' have been reached in all markets throughout the economy, a certain allocation of resources will have been brought about. Labour and capital will have been drawn into markets where demand is strong, and away from those where it is weak. Since buyers are under no compulsion to spend their money in one way rather than another, the amounts they are willing to spend on the various commodities can be assumed to reflect the intensity of their wants. On the supply side, *competition* between producers will ensure that the prices they ask represent the smallest cost, in terms of scarce resources, of providing the desired quantities of the various commodities. **In these conditions it can be claimed that wants are being satisfied to the highest degree possible within the limitations imposed by the scarcity of resources.**

9 THE 'MARKET ECONOMY': LIMITATIONS

An economy of this kind, in which all goods and services are provided through free markets, is called a '*price system*' or '*market economy*'. Its chief characteristic is that economic decisions are thoroughly decentralised. No individual member of the community needs to worry about the working of the system as a whole; the allocation of scarce resources between their various possible uses is the combined result of millions of separate decisions – by consumers, in spending their incomes; by firms, in making their production plans; by workers, in deciding where to seek employment; and so on. The government must maintain order, enforce contracts, punish theft and fraud, and generally ensure that the working of markets is not disturbed by extraneous factors; it must establish a number of basic conditions, for example, by laying down safety regulations in mines and factories; but it need not do anything more. Without any deliberate organisation of production and distribution on the part of the government, the economy will run itself.

As indicated at the end of the last section, it can be argued that a 'market economy' will cause scarce resources to be allocated in such a way as to maximise the satisfaction of wants. Indeed, this is the traditional case for '*laissez faire*'[1] – the doctrine that the economy prospers best when state intervention is kept to a minimum and everyone is allowed to follow his own interests as he sees them. In Adam Smith's words, "by pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. He is in this led by an *invisible hand* to promote an end which was no part of his intention."[2] It will be seen presently that this is subject to some important qualifications; but first, it is worth noting that self-interest is a force which will operate in any case, whether it serves the ends of society or not. For example, a country wishing to promote rapid industrialisation may prohibit the importation of certain manufactured goods in order to encourage the production of local substitutes; but if the latter are much more expensive than the foreign goods, the profit to be made from smuggling will cause resources to be diverted into it, and a further diversion of resources will be required in order to prevent it by strengthening the customs service. In general, a society whose collective aims and methods cut against the grain of individuals' self-interest will be less successful than one which can make use of it, since the former will be obliged to devote resources to counteracting the efforts of individuals to promote their personal well-being in ways which conflict with the system. Against this, it can be argued that such comparisons depend on the relative importance set on different social goals – and this involves value judgements which social scientists are wary of making. Certainly the case for '*laissez faire*' is based on the assumption that the social aim is to maximise the satisfaction of everyone's wants, rather than (say) to win a war, or continue traditions handed down from the past, or spread a new religion.

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[1] This was the famous reply of some merchants to the Marquis d'Argenson, an 18th century French minister; he asked them, "Qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire pour vous aider?" ("What must I do to help you?") and they answered "*Nous* laissez faire" ("Just let *us* get on with our own business").

[2] See extract in the *Reader* (p. 42).

Given this objective, however, can a completely free market economy be relied on to achieve it? If not, some degree of government control will be essential; and there are, in fact, a number of ways in which the working of a pure market economy is open to criticism.

The first concerns the distribution of incomes as between individual members of the community. Even if each one is making the best use of his resources – that is, getting the best return he can from the use of his labour-power and accumulated wealth, and spending the resulting income in whatever way gives him the greatest satisfaction – it may still be possible to increase *total* satisfaction by taking income from some people and transferring it to others. If two people have exactly the same capacity for enjoyment, and yet one has £100 a week and the other £10, the transfer of £1 from the first to the second will allow the poorer to satisfy wants which are more urgent than those the richer has to give up. There will be a *net* increase in the total satisfaction enjoyed by the two of them; logically, their combined satisfaction would be greatest if income were divided equally so that they had £55 each. But note the assumption on which this conclusion rests – namely, that the two individuals have the same capacity to derive satisfaction from economic goods. Strictly, there is no way of measuring one person's pleasure or pain against another's in quantitative terms – and even if there were, it might still be argued that if one person's capacity for satisfaction happens to be much greater than another's, the former *ought* to have a higher income than the latter.[1] A second implicit assumption is that the total income to be distributed will not change, no matter how it is divided between individuals. But there is an obvious connection between incomes and economic incentives; higher incomes may be the reward for harder-than-average work, for initiative and inventiveness, or for taking risks which pay off in terms of higher output; reduce these rewards, and total production may fall sufficiently to wipe out the benefits of income equalisation. None the less, extreme inequalities of income and wealth must certainly be regarded as incompatible with a satisfaction-maximising use of resources, and almost all governments attempt to reduce them by progressive[1] income taxes and death duties.

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[1] One might imagine, for example, a highly sophisticated aristocrat who would suffer great deprivation if he could no longer afford champagne, a box at the opera and so on—as compared with a boorish peasant whose tastes were so primitive that he could make little use of a portion of the aristocrat's income if it were transferred to him.

A second reason why a pure market economy may be at fault is that it may fail to make full use of the scarce resources which are available to it. The process of production generates incomes, in the form of wages, profits, interest and so on, which furnish the recipients with the means of buying the goods and services that are being produced. If all available resources are in use (so that 'full employment' of labour exists, in the sense that there is a job for everybody who wants one at existing wage-levels), this means that a certain level of output is being produced, and that incomes of equal value are being earned. To maintain 'full employment', the community must be willing to spend the whole of their incomes on buying the current output of goods and services. It is not necessary that every single individual should spend the whole of his income; merely that the underspending of those who save should balance the overspending of others – the 'others' being mainly business firms who are borrowing in order to buy new capital equipment. But if the community as a whole is not willing to spend as much as this, so that the total demand for output falls short of the amount of production forthcoming at full employment, firms will find themselves with unsold goods left on their hands, and will be forced to cut back production; and this in turn will mean that some workers are thrown out of employment and some capital equipment is left standing idle. Alternatively, if the community tries to spend *more* than enough to buy the total full-employment output, the result will be an inflationary increase in prices. So the vital question is, will total demand in a pure market economy always tend towards the 'full-employment' level? Nineteenth-century economists generally assumed that it would; but the great depression of the early 1930s, when massive unemployment persisted for years in all major industrial countries, forced urgent reconsideration of this view, and J. M. (later Lord) Keynes developed a new theory[2] which suggested that it might not be possible to maintain full employment without government intervention of various kinds, since the market economy would not necessarily do so by itself.

A third reason why a market economy may fail to operate to the best advantage is that firms may not be sufficiently competitive. If there are a large number of firms in a market, their competition will force down the selling-price to the point at which production is only just worthwhile for the least efficient[3] firm in the market, when that firm is earning the very smallest amount of profit necessary to induce it to carry on business at all. But a *monopolist* firm, which has the market to itself, is in a position to fix its selling-price at a higher level than is strictly necessary to cover the costs (including the necessary minimum of profit) of carrying production up to the point at which consumers' demands are met. It will be making a profit simply out of being a monopoly.

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[1] In this context, the word 'progressive' means only that the proportion of income taken in tax increases as the income itself rises.

[2] Put forward in his famous book, now an economic 'classic', *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936).

[3] This may not be quite fair: 'highest-cost' would be better, since firms may be at a disadvantage for other reasons than lower efficiency—for example, where a shop has a less favourable position than its competitors.

A pure monopoly, where there is literally only a single seller of a given commodity, is rare; more usually, a fairly small number of large firms dominate the market, avoiding price-competition among themselves and preferring to compete by advertising and other methods of sales promotion. But in these cases also, consumers are being made to pay higher prices than are really needed to attract the necessary scarce resources, and production in these markets may be lower than it ought to be to give a satisfaction-maximising allocation of resources. To be fair, it should be noted that monopoly is sometimes inevitable for technical reasons (there would be no sense, for example, in having ten separate railway companies running services between London and Birmingham), or because a large-scale production process, operated by a single firm, is the alternative to a much more costly small-scale method of production which would be compatible with the existence of many small firms. Even so, these considerations do not re-establish the case for '*laissez faire*', and they *do* suggest the need for some kind of government regulation of markets.

The mention of advertising raises another point of objection apart from its effects on competition. To say that resources should be so used as to satisfy wants to the utmost, is to accept the pattern of wants as the frame to which everything else must be fitted – the rock, as it were, on which the resource-allocation structure is built. But the techniques of 'demand creation' attempt to change the wants themselves, instead of leaving the economy to produce what consumers want, they aim at making people want what the economy produces. It is often argued that 'demand creation', by allowing firms to count on mass sales, makes it possible for them to undertake large-scale low-cost production and keep prices low; also, that by getting new products more readily accepted it encourages technological advances and their application in production. It is true, too, that wants tend to change and increase of themselves as time goes by – as already noted on pp. 65–6; this makes it impossible to isolate and measure the effects of 'demand creation' as such. But the very fact that wants *can* be adapted to suit a given resource-allocation inevitably blurs the logic of the '*laissez faire*' argument.

Yet another difficulty arises from the fact that the true costs of producing commodities may not be fully measured by the financial costs actually met by firms. Suppose a chemical factory discharges noxious waste matter into a nearby river, and kills all the fish. The loss of the fish is a genuine cost to society as a whole – yet the firm will not have to pay it (unless, of course, there are specific legal provisions about such matters); and it will not appear in the firm's accounts. In this case, the *social cost* of making the chemical products, as measured by the *total* resources expended by society as a whole, is greater than the *private cost*, i.e. the resources for which the firm itself has to pay. But firms' decisions about how much to produce depend on their private costs – so where these happen to be less than the social costs, they will be producing more than they should do from the point of view of society as a whole, and a misallocation of resources will result.

Finally, it must be noted that the case for the 'pure' market economy is the better, the more quickly the pattern of resource-allocation adapts itself to changes in the pattern of wants. However efficient the market economy might be in matching resources to wants in the long run, this would mean very little if a lengthy period of adjustment was needed whenever a change in preferences occurred. By the time the adaptation was half-way completed, the want-pattern might have changed yet again, and another process of adjustment would have to begin. Yet the very existence of a high degree of specialisation, backed up by large quantities of capital equipment, inevitably involves problems of this kind.

Consider once more the two-family relationship described much earlier. It was assumed that though the Browns specialised on making clothing and the Greens on shoes, each family retained the ability to produce both goods. But it is in the nature of things that they will eventually lose their capacity to produce the goods they are now getting by exchange, and their 'productivity ratios' will become more and more divergent; the Browns, for example, will acquire capital equipment which is specifically designed for making cloth, and will eventually become so committed to their specialism that they are almost incapable of doing anything else. But this will make them very vulnerable to a fall in the demand for cloth: having given up their alternative capability, they will be forced to accept whatever terms of exchange are consistent with selling the whole of their output – and these might fall very low. Yet to get out of this situation by re-starting shoe production could be a painful and expensive process, requiring the purchase of shoemaking equipment and the acceptance of the fact that much of their clothmaking machinery is now redundant. In the same way, individual workers who have specialised on a particular sub-process in a given industry may find that a reduction in demand for the industry's product will cause them either lower wages or unemployment, while moving to another occupation would involve discarding hard-won skills and starting at the bottom again. Similarly, shareholders who are joint owners of the industry's capital equipment may find their dividends severely cut, and the re-sale value of their shares reduced; where firms are owned by the state instead of by private shareholders, the same sort of losses will have to be borne by the public at large. Workers and shareholders in industries which have *gained* demand will, of course, benefit correspondingly; but the fact remains that quite a long period may elapse during which the economy is under-equipped and under-manned for some purposes, and over-equipped and over-manned for others.

10 THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY

For all these reasons, then – income-inequality, restraints on competition, the possibilities of unemployment and inflation, differences between private and social costs, and the pains and dislocations of adjustment processes – the performance of a 'laissez faire' economy may fall a long way short of the social aim of maximising satisfaction. It has been suggested, in the course of the argument, that government intervention may be required to correct at least some of these defects. Moreover, there is one group of commodities which cannot, in any case, be provided through the mechanism of supply and demand: these are the services performed by the government itself, such as defence, the administration of justice, and the maintenance of public order. All of these activities satisfy wants of various kinds, and all of them require the use of scarce resources; they are, therefore, 'economic goods' in just the same way as loaves of bread and yards of cloth.[1] Yet it would not be possible (even if it were thought desirable) to sell military defence or police protection on the market, letting each individual buy as much or as little as he wants, and letting the prices of these services be determined by supply and demand. What the government actually does, as everyone knows, is to decide on the supply of these services on political and social grounds, and finance them from taxation – the amount paid by each taxpayer bearing no particular relation to the services he receives.

Even the government of a '*laissez faire*' economy would have to provide a minimum of services in this way. A more active one could go further, and use its powers of taxation and expenditure to offset defects in the market economy of the kind which have been noted. It might make incomes less unequal by financing social security payments to poorer people from taxes laid on the richer. If unemployment occurs because total demand is too low to call for sufficient output, it could stimulate demand by itself spending more, or, by cutting taxes, inducing private individuals and firms to spend more.[2] It could tax activities whose private costs happen to fall short of their social costs. Monopolies and 'demand creation' could be restrained by law; alternatively, where monopolies are technically inevitable (as they tend to be in public utilities like gas and electricity) they could be nationalised.

But when the degree of state intervention in the economy has become as great as this, the question arises whether it would not be better for the government to take over the *whole* responsibility for arranging production and distribution. Instead of leaving the price and output of each commodity to be settled by the interplay of supply and demand in the market, it could set up a Central Planning Authority (C.P.A.) which would lay down how much each firm is to produce, and how much labour, materials and other inputs it must use; it would tell each firm what to do with its output – so many tons to be sent to firm X, so many to Y, etc.; it would decide what proportion of output should consist of consumers' goods, what proportion should be new capital equipment, how many new dwelling-houses should be built, and so on. If no free markets are left at all, the system will be a pure '*command economy*', in which *all* choices are made by the C.P.A. Instead of receiving money-incomes to be spent at their own discretion, consumers are given ration cards entitling them to a given quantity of each commodity; instead of choosing their own occupations, workers are directed into whatever activities the C.P.A. thinks fit.

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[1] It is customary to think of 'goods' as tangible things like eggs and shoes, and 'services' as actions performed for someone else, such as retail distribution or hairdressing. But what they all have in common is that they satisfy *wants* in some way; so if it is 'a good thing' to create well-being by satisfying wants, they are *all* 'goods'. Eighteenth and 19th century economists, from Adam Smith to Karl Marx, used to distinguish between 'productive' and 'unproductive' labour, the former being that which produced tangible material output, and the latter producing services. Nowadays, economists regard *any* want-satisfying activity as 'production', so that this illogical distinction has disappeared from economics; but it still lingers on as (a) a vague feeling that activities like steel-making and cloth-weaving are more vital and meritorious than services like shopkeeping and banking, and (b) the convention (due to Marxist dogma) by which the Communist countries' statistics of national output register only 'material product' and exclude services.

[2] This means that the government would be running a budget deficit. The implications of this will be considered further in Units 14 and 15. At this point, all that needs to be said is that to run a deficit may be the correct policy in certain circumstances.

The job of the C.P.A., in this kind of economy, is to allocate all scarce resources in such a way as to achieve maximum fulfilment of the objectives laid down for it by the government. If the goal is to maximise want-satisfaction, it will have to decide such questions as whether ten million men's shirts plus twenty million women's dresses would give the community more satisfaction than twelve million shirts plus sixteen million dresses, if both pairs of outputs could be produced from the textile industry's present resources; or whether it would be better to increase the output of *both* shirts *and* dresses by moving resources into textiles from some other industry – which would, of course, mean a fall in the other industry's output. The C.P.A. must also determine the most productive way of combining different kinds of resources in each industry – for example, should agriculture be 'labour-intensive' (i.e. using much labour relatively to land and capital) or 'land-intensive'? – and it will have to ensure that all its decisions are mutually consistent, so that the planned output of steel will be enough to meet the planned requirements of steel-using industries, the planned output of tyres sufficient to match the output of cars, and so on.

The number of commodities and industries is so large that an enormous amount of information must be collected to enable the C.P.A. to take the necessary decisions about each of them, and this will itself mean a diversion of scarce resources – the labour of statisticians, the building and use of computers, the occupation of office-space, etc. – which will have to be allowed for in the plan[1]; while if the information itself is defective, it may cause the C.P.A. to misallocate resources. The peculiar difficulty of planning, however, is to get everything right at one and the same time, since every single decision is contingent on a large number of others: the C.P.A. is in the position of someone trying to solve an enormous number of simultaneous equations within a very limited space of time, knowing that the pattern of wants and the resources available will both have changed if the solution is not quickly reached.

All this suggests that a pure 'command economy' might fall a long way short of the goal of maximising want-satisfaction. But no country has ever, in fact, attempted this. In the Second World War, Britain was virtually a 'command economy', with strict consumer rationing and direction of labour; but the aim was the relatively simple one of deploying resources in the way thought most effective for winning the war. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is not a pure command economy, since people are free to choose their occupations, and consumers can choose how to spend their incomes[2] on the range of consumer goods offered to them; that is, the 'demand' side of markets for consumer goods, and the 'supply' side of the labour market, are in many ways the same as in market economies. Thus, if Soviet planners find that the current output of a certain consumers' good can be sold in full only if it is offered at a price well below its production cost, they know they have over-allocated resources to this particular line of production and should shift some to other markets; similarly, if they find that workers will take jobs in a certain place only if they are offered higher-than-average wages, this tells them that the locality's output ought not to be made up of 'labour-intensive' goods. Thus, the Soviet planning problem has fewer dimensions, and is in principle easier to solve than that of the 'pure' command economy; even so, the system's performance is still far from satisfactory, and the Soviet Union has in recent years been experimenting with the possibility of introducing more 'market' elements into its economic system, for example by letting retail organisations buy what they want from manufacturing enterprises instead of having to accept planned deliveries of goods whether or not they are thought to be saleable. Other Communist countries have moved in the same direction, the most extreme case being that of Yugoslavia.

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[1] If the performance of a command economy were being compared with that of a market economy with identical resources, it might turn out that this 'planning cost' was decisive; i.e. that although the command economy allocated resources better than the market economy in other respects, its superiority was more than offset by the diversion of scarce resources into the planning apparatus itself.

[2] This implies that *money* plays an essential part in the Soviet economy as a means of exchange, as described on p. 72 above. In a thorough-going command economy, on the other hand, the C.P.A. would plan everyone's consumption in terms of goods and services, and would merely distribute ration cards entitling people to obtain the commodities from distribution centres. These cards would *not* be a form of money; in fact, the full command economy would not require the use of money at all. You may care to reflect on why this is so.

11 PLANNING, MARKETS AND THE 'MIXED' ECONOMY

The student will (it is hoped) have noticed that in the foregoing comparison of 'market' and 'command' economies, the words 'capitalism' and 'socialism' have not been used. The omission is deliberate, and is intended to suggest that the distinction between the first pair is not the same as that between the second. Both 'capitalism' and 'socialism' are hackneyed terms for which many definitions have been advanced, but the weight of opinion is probably in favour of defining them in terms of the *ownership* of productive resources other than labour. Under capitalism, most[1] of the economy's capital equipment, land, etc., is owned by private individuals, or by firms which are themselves owned by private shareholders; under socialism, these things are all owned by the state, or by entities whose managers are appointed and controlled by it. But the public ownership of capital equipment and scarce natural resources is not necessarily incompatible with the existence of free markets. The government could entrust its resources to a set of 'public enterprises', appointing managers whose instructions are simply to make as much profit as possible. The managers would then be left free to produce whatever they think fit, to buy materials from any supplier they choose, to employ whatever number of workers they think they need, and to sell their output in the market on the best terms they can get. Whatever profits they make (apart from the managers' own remuneration, which might be either a percentage of total profit or a fixed salary) would be paid to the state, which would also have to bear any losses. The situation would be that of an economy run by a number of independent (and in many cases competing) companies, each of which has the government as its only shareholder. There would be no Central Planning Authority, and all commodities would be sold through markets where their prices would be determined by supply and demand. This would certainly be a market economy, and yet it would also be socialist on the definition adopted above: the system could be called '*market socialism*'.

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[1] Not 'all', because it will still be necessary for the state to own *some* equipment, such as office-buildings in Whitehall, police patrol cars, and so on.

It is equally possible to conceive of 'planned capitalism', in which a C.P.A. lays down what every firm is to produce, where it must obtain its inputs, and how it must dispose of its output – yet in which the firms continue to be owned by private individuals who receive whatever profits are made. Nazi Germany developed a system of this kind in the 1930s, under the 'Four Year Plan'; in Britain's own war economy of the 1940s, capital was still privately owned even though the system had been transformed into a 'command economy'. Thus, in spite of the fact that capitalism has usually been associated with free markets, and socialism with planning, neither pair is logically inseparable. Once this is recognised, it becomes possible to regard both the market mechanism and economic planning as merely different ways of getting scarce resources allocated between different uses. The choice between them can be viewed merely as a choice of technique, and need not be complicated by the various political and ethical factors that enter into the 'capitalism vs. socialism' debate.

In spite of the many labels and slogans ('communist', 'capitalist', 'free', 'totalitarian', etc.) which are applied to different countries' economies, the fact is that they all embody various *mixtures* of planning and free markets, and of public and private ownership. Our own economy has a large 'public sector' which includes a number of major industries – coal, gas, electricity and railway transport, for example – as well as many activities, such as health, education and housing, which we think of as public 'social services', but which in many other countries are left in the private sector to be provided on a private-ownership, demand-and-supply basis. Even if the government wishes to disturb the private sector as little as possible, the scale of its own activities is bound to exercise a profound influence on it; so does its choice of taxes and its control of the monetary system. So the government of a '*mixed economy*' – 'mixed' both in the sense of combining public with private ownership, and in that of containing elements of administrative planning alongside free markets – is bound to keep a careful eye on the economy; even though it attempts no comprehensive plan of the kind used in a command economy, it must still exercise a degree of broad 'economic management' to ensure that resources are allocated to the best advantage. Some of the problems of economic policy in a 'mixed' economy will be discussed in more detail in later units of the course.

12 THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

At the beginning of this unit, it was suggested that one important reason why men live in societies (though by no means the only one) is because they can satisfy their economic wants much more fully by doing so. But not all wants and needs are economic, so it is worth considering briefly whether greater *economic* want-satisfaction may not entail losses in other directions.

One obvious consequence of the process of specialisation described earlier, is to increase the degree of interdependence between people. The hypothetical Brown family of pp. 67–69 came to depend on the Greens for their shoes, just as the Greens came to depend on the Browns for their clothing; and it was pointed out on p. 78 that each family was likely, in the end, to lose its own ability to produce the commodity it was acquiring by exchange. In the modern industrial economy, specialisation has been pushed so far that the typical worker in manufacturing concentrates on a detailed sub-process in the making of a single commodity, and in return enjoys a vast range of different goods and services, which he could not possibly make for himself and which are the joint output of other specialised workers using large amounts of complicated machinery. A modern Robinson Crusoe would almost certainly be far less of an 'all-rounder' than his 17th-century predecessor, and would have a poorer chance of survival on his own. Increased dependence on others is a necessary concomitant of the increasing specialisation which leads to higher levels of output and consumption.

The greater the degree of interdependence, the greater the vulnerability of individuals and groups; for example, if the flow of an essential component to a factory should suddenly be interrupted, the whole production process may have to stop; if suburban transport breaks down, commuters are marooned at stations and bus-stops; a cessation of petrol supplies would bring all motor traffic to a complete halt. To some extent, increased vulnerability may be matched by an increase in power: by threatening to stop producing a vital component, a small group of firms or workers can bring enormous pressure to bear on a whole industry. Apart from its economic implications, this situation raises a number of *political* questions. A key-group may not only hold out for higher incomes, but may also use its power in order to force some political measure on the community, causing war to be declared or postponed, or a ministry changed, against the wishes of the majority. In general, the patterns of influence which economic interdependence makes possible can have important effects on the political structure of society – effects which may be thought undesirable in the light of the prevailing political philosophy.

The process of specialisation itself, when extended a long way, may create highly repetitive jobs which not only involve much boredom for those who do them but also induce a sense of helplessness and 'not counting', causing the individual to feel himself a small and unimportant cog in a vast, remorseless machine. This feeling may be augmented by the power and complexity of modern machinery itself. To the extent that people are depressed by such sensations, this will go some way to offset the increased satisfaction of economic wants due to higher incomes. A related consideration is the possibility of a fall in the satisfaction derived from work itself: an old-fashioned cabinet-maker, though himself a specialist, may be thought to have derived a pleasure from his craftsmanship, and from seeing a piece of work through from start to finish, which a modern furniture-factory operative cannot possibly get from the simplified, repetitive process he performs. This, too, may be regarded as a possible offset to the increase of output and incomes which the extension of specialisation and mechanisation makes possible.

The gradual increase in the complexity of specialisation since Adam Smith's day, combined with the introduction of new techniques and the use of more and more capital equipment, have not only revolutionised economic life but are continuing to do so at an accelerating pace. All kinds of traditional practices and relationships have been abandoned or destroyed within the European countries which were the first to undergo the experience of 'industrial revolution', and they in turn have made it impossible for non-European societies to maintain their traditional economic and social structures. Whether any particular set of social relationships is inherently better or worse than any other, is obviously a difficult (some would say a meaningless) question to answer. But this sort of comparison is not especially relevant here. The real question is whether the increasing rate of change in economic life may not, perhaps, cause the social structure to change so rapidly and continuously that a profound sense of instability and restlessness exists in the minds of the community, and that this unease is sufficiently painful to offset the benefits of increasing income and consumption.

Finally, there is the fact that advances in specialisation and its technology arise from – and, in turn, lead to – a 'rationalising' habit of mind. Improvements in production occur when someone says, "Why *should* commodity X be produced in exactly that way? Wouldn't it be better to . . .?' – and then suggests a more efficient way of doing it. Once this scientific, rational approach is diffused through all economic activity, it inevitably comes to be applied in other spheres of social life; and in the end, it is likely to squeeze out a great deal of the mystery and magic of life along with much ignorance and unreason. Some people, perhaps, would not regret it; but it is at least conceivable that it might represent a worsening of the quality of life which would have to be set against the more obvious benefits of economic progress.

All these questions lie outside the main field of interest of economics, and they are put forward merely as possibilities; the other disciplines which contribute to the course will no doubt have something to say about them. But merely to ask them is to remind the student that economics gives only one kind of insight into the life of society as a whole.

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Unit 4

Societies and Environments

CONTENTS UNIT 4

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 90

1 INTRODUCTION 91

1.1 Man as a Territorial Animal 91

2 PHYSICAL DETERMINISM 91

2.1 Physical determinism: Case studies 92

2.2 The cold deserts 92

2.3 Tropical rain forests 92

2.4 The hot deserts 93

2.5 The cool and warm temperate regions 93

2.6 Generalisations from examples 93

3 (PHYSICAL) DETERMINISM AND POSSIBILISM 94

4 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS TO SOCIAL AREA ANALYSIS 95

5 WHY DO MEN LIVE IN DIFFERENT SETTLEMENT FORMS? 96

6 RURAL SETTLEMENT TYPES AND LAND USE 96

7 TOWNS AND CITIES 98

8 NETWORKS AND SYSTEMS 98

9 CLOSED SYSTEMS AND OPEN SYSTEMS 99

10 RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT 99

APPENDIX 100

BIBLIOGRAPHY 109

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SOCIETIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Man as a Territorial Animal

Geography as the spatial analysis of man's territorial organisation.

Men live in societies because they are social animals, though not the only ones (see Units 1 and 5). They are also territorial animals, though not the only ones. They show a marked tendency to lay claim to some stretch of ground around their home, and to maintain a territorial organisation of varying scale and complexity. Territorial man is the focus of the geographer's interest. Of the social sciences, geography is the one which concentrates on the relationship between man's activities – whether social, economic or political in focus – and the space or area or territory which he occupies. The human geographer's answer to the question "Why do men live in societies?" will inevitably be one based on a framework of spatial analysis.

2 PHYSICAL DETERMINISM

Are men forced by the physical environment to live in societies? – in particular forms of settlement?

It might reasonably be expected that human geographers would make a case for physical determinism, a case that the physical environment forces man to live in societies, or in particular forms of society, and indeed most of the Social Sciences Foundation Course Team expected us to do so when we assembled. This problem is not in fact a major growing point in modern geography. But without pre-judging the answer we can certainly ask the question "Is it true that physical environment forces men to live in societies?"[1]

It is true that not many physical environments are so bountiful that they owe a living to a human being, or even individual families – or thrust it under his nose as in *Robinson Crusoe* or *The Swiss Family Robinson*. To this extent the physical environment may force living in societies upon groups of men. And once this is so, one might theorise, the economic arguments of Unit 3 would begin to operate in favour of larger and more complex societies.

But do particular physical environments determine particular forms of society, in a particular terrain or in a particular climate for instance? Try examining the various forms of society, of settlement pattern, of economy and of polity in the main climatic zones of the world, as an example. We shall suggest one approach to weighing the evidence presently. But you will probably find that only the extremes of physical environment appear to relate with any great consistency to particular types of society, or economy, or polity.

This will probably be true even if, for simplicity's sake, you take 'traditional' ways of life, rather than the very rapidly changing kaleidoscopic patterns of the world since Columbus, and especially since the ever-accelerating transport revolutions of the last century.

But, you may say, coalfields in the 19th century were peculiarly and closely linked with industrial development. Is this evidence *for* physical determinism? Only so far, for not all coalfields actually carried industrial complexes – not even all discovered coalfields. Coal was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for industrialisation. Or to put it more directly, some other factor was needed as well, such as capital accumulation, business or engineering skill or the like.

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[1] Students needing to refresh their knowledge of the physical environment may refer to Beckinsale 1966, Bloom 1969, Lake 1958, or Strahler 1965.

2.1 Physical Determinism: Case Studies

Case studies from C. D. Forde (1934), *Habitat, Economy and Society.*[1]

2.2 The Cold Deserts

In the Arctic regions the cold deserts are polar regions dominated by the Eskimo hunter-gatherer society discussed in Forde's Chapter VIII. The Antarctic cold desert, of course, has no traditional societies. The only slightly less hostile sub-polar regions in the northern hemisphere have an inter-digitation (that is, interlocking fingers) of hunter-gatherers like the Yukaghir of Siberia or the caribou Indians of northern Canada (Forde 1934, Chapters VII and VIII), with half-hunters, half-herders like the Tungus of Siberia (Chapter XVII). What happens in the few substantial parts of the southern hemisphere with what one might call a harsh temperate climate even if not a sub-polar one? Tierra del Fuego has tribes somewhat comparable to the hunter-gatherers of the northern hemisphere, though most accounts suggest that their traditional way of life was much more wretched (Forde 1934, 95–8). The aborigines of Tasmania, extinct for almost a century, were regarded as much more primitive in society and economy than the racially distinct aborigines of mainland Australia.

2.3 Tropical Rain Forests

At the opposite extreme of the climatic zones, the rain forests mainly of equatorial lowlands have a preponderance in some tracts of hunter-gatherers (of course with different techniques from those of the polar and sub-polar regions, and living on very different plants and animals), for example the Semang and Sakai of Malaya (Forde 1934, Chapter II). But agriculture is *possible* here, and in some tracts there are tribal groups of subsistence cultivators mainly practising some form of shifting cultivation (that is, they cultivate a patch of garden cleared in the forest for a few years but move on to a fresh patch when soil fertility is exhausted, weeds too rampant, or perhaps because of disease or other ill-fortune). Examples are the Boro of the Amazon or the Yoruba of West Africa (see Forde 1934, Chapters IX and X). Subsistence farming implies that the people live mainly from the crops they grow, though in some economies stock rearing takes place. There is no necessary implication of a bare subsistence level, though shifting cultivation groups may be reduced to bare subsistence in a bad year or if population outstrips the local resources used at the prevailing level of technology. Sometimes the period of regrowth of the forest is reduced, so that soil fertility is restored, or partly so, by a more systematic period of regrowth often called bush fallow.[1]

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[1] This is a *recommended* book, but not one that a student *must* have in order to follow the course. The student able to read it will benefit, but the unit has been designed so that the work can be completed without reading this book.

2.4 The Hot Deserts

One might by this stage say: there is control by the physical environment, but it usually consists of inter-digitation of two types – hunter-gatherer and herder in the sub-polar regions, hunter-gatherer and swidden cultivator in the rain forests. The hot deserts of the Old World do show inter-digitation, between nomadic herders like the bedouin or the Masai, and hunter-gatherers like the bushmen discussed in the *Reader*, Chapter 5 (see also Forde 1934, Chapters III and XV). However, the Old World deserts have for millennia also nourished oasis cities of wide influence, of which the great cities and foci of culture of Mesopotamia, the Indus plains and the Nile Valley can be considered extreme cases, where the oasis is on a very large scale. The Americas offer some analogies, perhaps Southern Africa, but not Australia on present knowledge. The Australian deserts were used by hunter-gathering aborigines, with relatively slight changes in technology in more humid climates.

The Cool and Warm Temperate Regions

For the rest, cool or warm temperate, whether oceanic and equable or continental and more extreme in seasonal contrast, it is extremely difficult to generalise, even about 'traditional' societies. It is true that the stormiest coasts, even if relatively warm compared with the sub-polar regions, tend, like North-west Scotland, to have few sizeable cities. But comparable terrain in Norway has Bergen. At the opposite extreme are other transitions, like the margins of the deserts of central Asia. But over very wide tracts the physical environment appears to offer a wide spectrum of choice in types of economy, society, settlement form and polity.

2.6 Generalisation from Examples

On the evidence, then, do groups of men live in societies – or even in particular forms of settlement – because of the control exercised by their physical environment? At a certain level the student may care to test the generalisations on pp. 92 and 93 for himself. Some people find it helpful to set out their examples in a simple table or matrix:

Climate zone	Tribe, etc.	Mode of life	Settlement form	Political organisation
Trop. rain forest	1			
	2			
Hot desert	1			
	2			
	3			
etc.				

---

[1] The Anglo-Saxon term *swidden* for somewhat comparable scrub-fallow rotations has been revived to cover the various types of shifting cultivation, and you may meet the term in your reading. Brookfield's two articles in the *Reader, Understanding Society*, are more recent and specialised studies than those in Forde, of the people practising bush fallow, at a very high population density and actually planting casuarina trees, a conifer-like species growing mainly in the Australasian region, which has root nodules with the power of fixing nitrogen, in a fashion similar to pulses (peas, beans, etc.) in western European rotations.

Note: Many more case studies would be needed before this tabulation could be fully effective. Even using every example we could cull from Forde (1934), we could not frame a more formal exercise in a satisfactory way, so we are simply suggesting this approach to tabulating data because the habit of assessing the evidence, fragmentary or solid, is useful.

You can draw on the preceding discussion, on Forde, if you are able to read the selected chapters, or on your own travel and experience. It is unlikely that you will reach a conclusion which can be backed by statistics, but even so the table may assist you in forming a judgement, a pulling together – a process sometimes called subjective integration, to distinguish it from findings supported by statistical findings. You should perhaps consider the more philosophical aspects of the problem from time to time; it may well be useful for you to do this at the end of Unit 5, that is at the end of the introductory section of the course.

3 (PHYSICAL) DETERMINISM AND POSSIBILISM

(Determinism can also be – often is – economic, political or religious.)

At a certain level, then, we have considered the evidence that the physical environment determines that men live in societies – we have tested the theory of physical determinism, or the physical-determinist hypothesis. We have encouraged you to sift the evidence for yourself, yet we have let you know that the cruder forms of physical determinism are not widely accepted among modern geographers.[1] Do we then simply abandon studying the influence of the physical environment on human activities, and especially human organisations as they spread across and affect the earth's surface? Not necessarily.

It may already have occurred to you that there are often *some* relationships between physical environments and the spatial arrangements of human settlements, though they fall short of control. The dry Lincolnshire Wolds tend to have compact villages clustered round a source of water (though modern farms are more scattered so out-and-out determinism will not do). The damp Celtic fringe (North-west Scotland, western Ireland, Brittany, and, historically, Cornwall) tends to have scattered patterns of homesteads (though traditional Celtic settlements included an irregularly planned but compact hamlet form). Similarly there may be a relationship with the spatial organisation of the economy. There is the association of the prairies with extensive methods of agriculture – that is with low capital investment per acre, though often with advanced technology and high investment per farmer or per worker. But one should remember the prairies were formerly used by nomadic hunters.[2]

Many geographers think it is part of their job to explore these relationships, and find a need for some hypothesis or theoretical framework within which to work. This has led to a qualified determinism: sometimes called possibilism (see Martin 1951).

Possibilism implies that in many areas nature presents man with a range of possibilities within which he may choose how he fashions his society, economy and polity – and their spatial organisation. If you go back to your table or matrix sifting evidence for the determinist hypothesis, you may find possibilism is helpful. It may be useful in explaining a whole spectrum of types of society within comparable physical environments. Thus the mediterranean climates of the world present contrasts in traditional cultural landscapes (the total landscapes resulting from physical factors and human influences), and even landscapes resulting from modern industrial society. Consider the total landscapes of the Mediterranean proper, California, central Chile, the Cape Town area, the Perth area of Western Australia, the Adelaide area of South Australia, and perhaps the North Island of New Zealand.

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[1] Students new to geography may find it helpful to refer to introductory works like Crone (1964), E. Jones (1964), or older works like Unstead (1965) or the classic Vidal de la Blache (1926).

[2] Once a word has come into use in a special or technical sense, as 'extensive' has here, the student will find it better to avoid using it in its common sense, at least when writing or speaking as a social scientist. 'Widespread' will often serve for 'extensive' in its common use. Similarly, 'intensive' is best kept for use when there is a high capital investment say in agriculture, though there is also a wider usage in which it is used in hyphenated form: capital-intensive, labour-intensive, and even land-intensive.

The present-day human geographer, then, does not answer our question "why do men live in societies" by a simple "because he has no option, because he is compelled to seek the security of society by the physical environment – landforms, climates, associations of plants and animals". The variety of ways of life, just discussed, rules out a simple answer of this kind. Yet despite variety in ways of life – and of settlement patterns next – these are not random: there are distribution patterns on the ground, and many human geographers conceive their proper field of study to be the description and explanation (or causal analysis) of areal distribution patterns on the ground: the distribution patterns of crops or of unemployment, of population or of types of towns and villages – or even house-types, of social classes or ethnic or religious groups, of recreational facilities and traffic, migration, juvenile delinquency or disease patterns.

We might reasonably transform the question "why do men live in societies?" to "why do men come together in various spatial arrangements?" The student will note that we are here tacitly *assuming* society – that man is a social animal – as we noted in the opening sentence of this unit, and as our sociologist in Unit 5 assumes throughout. On the other hand, we are not so inevitably committed to the study of relations between the physical environment and man's spatial organisation, though many of us still engage in these studies: our 'necessity for determinism' (or possibilism) is less, to borrow Martin's phrase. We go on to discuss settlement patterns in just this way – as spatial patterns – and it is worth noting that the newer approach we have called *networks and systems* (p. 98), is really a more sophisticated approach to the description, generalisation and explanation of spatial patterns.

4 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS TO SOCIAL AREA ANALYSIS

The study of settlement patterns is a traditional field of human geography, whereas social area analysis springs more from sociology – seeking to identify areas of differing status, for instance, by sifting census data of a socio-economic nature or by surveys using specially pointed questionnaires. The two disciplines can both merge and cross-fertilise.

There is a large literature, still growing, on the study of different kinds of settlements, like those in Figure 4.1: the caption gives some comment on the types selected by Houston in the original source. There may be economic implications, like lowered efficiency as we go from settlement form to field pattern associated with it: for example from a compact village to farm holdings, that are still arranged in scattered strips residual from an open field system (see Figure 4.2 and caption).

(5)

A few modern studies assess these quantitatively, for in some countries the issue of consolidation from scattered strips to compact holdings is as live as it was in England during the enclosure movement which culminated in the early 19th century (see Figures 4.4 to 4.10 and read the captions). 6a

There may well be sociological implications of living in a long street, village (or town) with no very definite focus – or in scattered hamlets or individual homesteads – as compared with some more sociable cluster round a church or inn or community centre of some kind; intuitively these may be conceived, even accepted, but it is not easy to put one's finger on detailed analyses. The issue is quite a live one in relation to arrangements and types of housing in housing estates and new towns.

There may be implications for forms of traditional government, considering settlement type and way of life together as we often must: nomadic herders in East Africa, for example, are accustomed to very fluid boundaries (Barber 1968) and Brookfield's first paper in the *Reader* shows something of this in the case of swidden cultivators, even where their agriculture is really as intensive as that of many farmers with fixed holdings. Most Indian villages have much more fixed boundaries, like that used for a different purpose in Figure 4.3.

5 WHY DO MEN LIVE IN DIFFERENT SETTLEMENT FORMS?

No matter how widely you may read in the field, not many articles or books will necessarily hit the nail on the head in helping to answer this question, for few were written to answer it explicitly. Implicitly there may be hints which you can piece together to give some kind of answer. You may find you can give a somewhat different kind of answer when you have read the next sections, but meantime, let us use again the process we called 'subjective integration' on p. 94. You may conclude perhaps that men live in such varied types of settlement because while man may be inherently a social and a territorial animal, he has such flexibility that he sees many ways of organising homes and workplaces on the ground, though surely preferred patterns may be traditional over generations and even centuries, while some links with climate especially may be found in settlement form as in building type. The generalisation may well seem so weak that it seems futile to pursue the topic. Yet it is an important theme, say, for town and country planning, including road planning. Happily there are other methods of attack than such speculation about ultimate causes, as we shall see.

6 RURAL SETTLEMENT TYPES AND LAND USE

We have already discussed social aspects of different types of settlements – very broadly contrasting compact or nucleated with dispersed rural settlements (see also Figures 4.4 to 4.10). Land use will be treated more fully in Unit 19, but here an introductory view is given of the rural settlement considered together with the use of land around it.

Nucleated hamlets and villages cover a very wide range of sizes – as the words 'hamlet' and 'village' imply – and also of shapes of settlement. We have to think of these as using say 1 to 100 sq. miles of the land around them. Dispersed rural settlements usually consist of scattered farmsteads. Each may be more or less centrally placed amidst its fields, perhaps with some bias toward a main road, as in the replanned landscape of Figure 4.4 or Figure 4.9. A more strip-like form may be descended from old field patterns, as in Figures 4.2 or 4.5, or it may be to give more equal shares of land of particular qualities, particularly if the strip covers a whole farm or a whole village, or parish.

Nucleated villages tend to be associated with residual or former open field systems (Figures 4.6 and 4.7), and they often retain some farmsteads in the village streets, whether these are regular or irregular in pattern. This is often true even if enclosures have taken place like those mapped in Figures 4.6 (b) and 4.8, so that there are also isolated farms amid their fields, as well as some in the village. The open fields are seldom cultivated communally today, though there may have to be communal agreement about some operations like allowing stock on to them, to graze on the stubble. They may remain unfenced, as commonly in continental Europe and, for instance, at Laxton in Nottinghamshire. But the farms remain in the hands of the farmer year after year and he can arrange his own rotation. The fields, like those in Figure 4.5, may show evidence of a former open field system, individually hedged or fenced.

Nucleated settlements with residual open fields and scattered strip holding may co-exist in the same region as consolidated farms with the farmstead among the fields, as we have noted. The consolidated farm ought to be more efficient, with less wasteful journeys between fields, and more opportunity to plan the land use as a whole in a rational way. Yet the broad land use pattern may be similar on consolidated holdings and on scattered strip holdings. For instance over much of Ayrshire (Figure 4.8) the prevailing pattern is of dairying, using the famous Ayrshire milk cattle, and a fair emphasis on moderately high quality pastures in the rotation, on farms like those in Figure 4.10 (b), as well as those in Figure 4.9.

On the other hand the land use on the consolidated farm may be rather different. Capitalist sheep farming came to many parts of the Scottish Highlands after the Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries – displacing the former clansmen's residually communal farming of cattle, and growing of oats, potatoes, barley (in certain localities), and hay. Nowadays the sheep farms may have some beef cattle, but land use remains much more orientated towards the simple product of mutton sheep with some wool production, as compared with actively farmed small-holdings or crofts in the 'crofting townships' which were set up in place of the decaying communal system at the time of the clearances.

However, some settlement and field patterns do seem to have some predilection for particular environments, though it is difficult to eliminate cultural influences. Thus, along the Atlantic fringe of Europe a common traditional land-use pattern includes small stock farms, especially for beef cattle, with small isolated farmsteads among smallish hedged fields. Something of this landscape can be seen from Galicia to western Norway. Within this area Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and Highland Scotland are sometimes called the Celtic fringe. The landscape described may hold more true for the Brythonic-language areas (Wales, Brittany and historically Cornwall) than for the Gaelic areas of Ireland and Highland Scotland. But even there differences arise – because of local emphasis on dairying and orchards – in Brittany for instance. And not all mild, wet, windy western sea-boards in temperate latitudes have a Celtic fringe or a landscape of this sort.

So you may care to revert to the discussion of possibilism for a moment; the physical environment may appear to offer possibilities rather than dictate a way of life and settlement pattern. But how consistent is the evidence?

7 TOWNS AND CITIES

Geographers also study larger settlements – towns, cities, metropolitan centres and so on. The metropolis is distinguished from two views of large urban groupings that overlap with each other and with the metropolis itself. One of these is the *conurbation*: a term coined by the late Sir Patrick Geddes for cities which have sprawled together with other towns and fused with them physically (though by no means always administratively). An example is the West Riding group of towns and cities which grew with the industrial revolution and the woollen industry. The other, *megalopolis*, is a term for something even bigger than a metropolis or a conurbation. It was coined by the French geographer Jean Gottmann (now Professor of Geography at the University of Oxford), particularly for the great urban concentration of the eastern United States, from Philadelphia and Baltimore through New York to Boston.

Geographers too have long been interested in the 'quarters' of a town or city, its internal regional differences. Studies of this kind can link with several sister disciplines. If they are particularly concerned with how urban centres have evolved during their history – a sort of urban historical geography – they may link with the 'urban biography' of historians. You may well encounter this from our historian colleagues in the Faculty of Arts. As studies of 'urban landscapes' or 'townscapes' become more analytical in relation to social causes and effects, they grade into the sociologist's 'social area analysis', and methods of analysis are inter-changed between the two disciplines.

Detailed mapping of land-use in towns, followed by analysis and interpretation, can link with town planning. Geography can often be applied, for man is not only a social animal, not only a territorial animal – but also a planning animal! Partly as a response to the needs of urban planning, urban geography is increasingly concerned with theory and with network and system analysis. This work is beyond the scope of the course, but it is introduced in Units 21 and 22.

8 NETWORKS AND SYSTEMS

Thus every human settlement and every change in it have some sociological implications, not necessarily well explored. Conversely some sociological problems have a spatial dimension. Every settlement is linked with a particular economy, itself with a spatial organisation, quite possibly a changing one – which is of concern to geographers. And almost every settlement is linked with a political organisation of some kind, and it too has a spatial aspect worthy of study.

Can we explore these three borderlands with our sister disciplines of sociology, economics and political science, using the concepts of networks and systems, increasingly used in geography during the last ten or fifteen years? We thought this theme justified our television programme for this unit.[1] It also is an important component of the *Reader* articles for Unit 4. and of the test questions and in a sense of the practical exercise. So it is an important part of the week's work even though it is only referred to briefly in this correspondence unit.

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[1] See the T.V. notes for Unit 4.

9 CLOSED SYSTEMS AND OPEN SYSTEMS

A pioneer worker in the systems approach distinguished between closed systems and open systems (Von Bertalanffy, 1950). The closed system has watertight boundaries, as it were, across which no exchange of energy occurs. The open system, on the other hand, is subject to intake of energy from an outside source or loss of energy to an outside destination. The hot water system is subject to intake from the water mains and to output to the taps and hot water radiators, so it is an open system even though intermittently closed, so that for *some* purposes of understanding, we might consider it closed. Similarly with problems in spatial analysis we might treat them as closed for some purposes, stating the simplifying assumption with care and removing it at an appropriate point in the argument.

As is often the case the basic concepts are quite simple, though the working out may get complex. Interestingly enough, you will find that the first page of Mackinder's paper in the *Reader* (p. 394) contains a fairly specific reference to open and closed systems, in his context of political geography on a world scale, but without the kind of mathematical analysis now given to the idea.

10 RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Clearly the question "Why do men live in societies?" is one to which geographers can contribute, to complement the other answers. In Unit 1, the psychologists told us that man lives in society because he is a social animal, though a peculiar one combining instinctive with complex learned behaviour. In Unit 2 the political scientists turned the question to "What do men hope to gain from living under government?" and gave us all food for thought and some answers from historical yet contemporary issues. In Unit 3 the economists answered that men live in societies in order to secure the benefits of division of labour. In Unit 5 the sociologists say that sociology *assumes* society but throws much light on it, including much that synthesises the analyses of the other social sciences, not by mere borrowing, but by intimate yet objective observations including *acting* as a member of functioning social groups.

We geographers have deprecated the cruder forms of physical determinism, though granting that it is a theory which helps us, to some extent, to understand human society in the extreme climates. As we have turned more directly to the focus of interest of modern geography in the later part of the unit, we have put the question "why do men live in societies?" into the geographically significant form "why do men come together in various spatial arrangements?".

We offer our synthesis, one based on areal or spatial analysis. We do not claim it as *the* synthesis, only as a possible one, which does pull together data from the borderlands with sociology, economics and political science – data of interest to our sister disciplines but with an areal aspect or dimension. Potentially there are links also with social psychology, and a pioneer paper in the *Reader* reaches out in that direction (A. Geddes in Chapter 33).

In a sense these discussions assume society, as does our sociologist in Unit 5. We invite study of types of settlement, of the question "why do men live in different types of settlement?", of rural settlement and land use, towns and cities, networks and systems. We have seen that economically simple societies can be complex, even sophisticated, socially and politically. The fact that our models fit economically simple and economically complex societies alike may strengthen the answer "man lives in societies because he is a social animal". We geographers have possibly edged too quickly into Section Two of the course– "How do men live in Societies?" But to "man lives in societies because he is a social animal" we can now add "and because he is also a territorial animal and a planning animal – to which aspects our discipline contributes a great deal of knowledge, and of 'know-how' about how to acquire more".

This unit is also an introduction to geography[1] and its possible contribution to the social sciences as a whole. Some problems treated briefly here will be followed up later, others will not, at least in this course. But in either category there is ample room for your own thinking as an independent scholar and thinker. If we don't ask the right questions to let you air your ideas, try some of them on your tutor, or on fellow-students. You may well have the germs of a future thesis or article for one of the learned journals already in embryo.

APPENDIX: GEOGRAPHY IN THE 1970s: ONE MAN'S RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

This appendix is optional reading as far as Unit 4 is concerned, that is you do not need anything in it to answer the test questions, even the self-test questions. All the same we think you might read it, now if you can, but if not, then later in the course. Unit 23, dealing with political geography, comes at the end of the main block of units of mainly geographical content – though there is a geographical contribution to the discussion of the population explosion in Unit 33. We have designed Unit 23 to be light in reading, so that you may be able to look back across the main part of our introduction to geography in the social sciences, and this might be a good time for you to read, or re-read, this appendix.

When we tried out an early draft of Unit 4 on volunteer or 'guinea-pig' students, we found that many reacted against this part of the draft, on the ground that it was woolly and confusing and broke up the argument. On the other hand, some of these guinea-pigs found some stimulating ideas in this slightly philosophical discussion of where geography stands in the 1970s, especially in relation to the social sciences. So we pruned most of this type of material out of this week's assignment proper, yet retain it in the form of appendix for optional reading, in case you are one of the ones stimulated rather than irritated by it!

Students who wish to read further along these lines might start with Crone (1964), Jones (1964), or Chorley and Haggett (1965), from which they can launch into the very large literature.

Physical Geography and Perception

There is a sense in which landforms only become landforms when people begin to think of them as such, in a self-conscious way, as pioneer geologists or later pioneer geomorphologists did. Social scientists as well as philosophers are interested in this problem of perception. Thus Hutton, an early geologist in Edinburgh (a non-practising medical man), began to sift evidence that Salisbury Crags, east of the smaller Edinburgh of the 18th century, was, as we should now say, a volcanic sill, and not due to Noah's flood, as often stated up to his time – a response to fundamentalist Biblical teaching. The time perspectives of such early geologists were summed up in the early 19th century in Playfair's famous phrase *There is no evidence of a beginning, nor prospect of an end*. We may find strangely modern the suggestion that we interpret the processes of the present as part of an infinite time-continuum. The approach has its relevance for the Darwinian revolution of the later 19th century, and for the social sciences.

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[1] See Appendix.

Physical Geography as a Stage Setting for Man, or Studied for its own Sake

In a way all studies of the physical environment are man-conditioned, because they arise from human thought – the conceptual framework arises in men's minds. Yet the human geographer may study the physical environment as the setting for human geography – a setting man has altered and by which he is in part conditioned (as to seasons of cropping, and within limits as to types or varieties of crops for instance). In contrast the physical geographer studies the physical environment for its own sake – because it is there, to use the analogy of why men strove so long to climb Mount Everest. The conceptual framework arises from the minds of men, but here trying to avoid orientation towards human affairs – anthropocentricity. Human geography is designedly more anthropocentric.

Physical Determinism: Habitat, Economy and Society

This concept, or hypothesis, is discussed on pp. 91–95 of the main text of this unit. To keep the discussion concise we restricted ourselves to relatively simple societies economically, leaving the more complex urban and industrial societies for the main block of geographical units later on in the course (Units 19 to 23).

C. Daryll Forde's book, on the recommended list, is a classic. Though locally out-dated, the society-environment relationships he discussed remain valid as socio-ecological findings. To expand: well-founded observations of the way of life of, say, the Masai of East Africa a generation ago, and of their relationships with their physical and cultural environment, are valid for either cross-cultural or historical comparisons, to show how these may deepen understanding of societies, including our own. Historical comparisons too, are invaluable as a test for findings proven only for a particular time. A series of snapshots at several historical phases may well prove of practical as well as academic value, the more so if the tools of sampling and of observation are sufficiently sharp to justify a level of forecasting at least better than a 'guesstimate'. Two papers by Brookfield have been included in the *Reader* to represent more recent thinking about comparable societies.

The student will note that the title of this section and of Forde's book includes the habitat on the one hand, and economy and society on the other, but not the polity or political organisation. This is a matter of convenience and available material at the time of writing; there are frequent references to political problems worthy of analysis in Forde's book, and in the case studies from several disciplines included in the *Reader*. Moreover, some of the problems will be discussed later under units dealing with government as such.

Forde uses a sub-title for his book: a geographical introduction to ethnology. Ethnology is defined as the science that deals with the varieties of human society and organisation, and is equated with cultural or social anthropology. Anthropology in turn is simply the science of man, physical anthropology dealing with physiological differences including racial characteristics in the proper sense, and social anthropology with social or sociological aspects. Social anthropology is treated in this course under sociology, and indeed it is virtually a sociology associated particularly with the economically simpler societies. It also has a particular association with long periods of 'participant observation', in which a social anthropologist may stay in a village or with a tribe for several years. Most of Forde's chapters are founded on studies of this kind. As its title suggests it includes aspects of both society and economy. It does indeed deal with societies often, though in some ways mistakenly, regarded as simple. Their kinship structure, for instance, is often extraordinarily complex.

The Cultural Landscape

In human geography there has traditionally been much interest in the occasional control and commoner conditioning of human spatial organisation by the physical environment, but also a growing awareness that even primitive men, at low densities, began to change the physical environment, to create a cultural landscape, and that this process has been much accelerated in the last few millennia, and especially the last few centuries (W. L. Thomas Jr. (Ed.) 1956).

It remains true that geographers are interested in interactions between groups of men and their environment; but the environment is largely man-created. We shall now try to go with you from traditional human geography towards recent trends in the subject.

Human Geography and its Branches: Social, Economic and Political Geography

Human geography complements other social sciences by concentrating on the areal or spatial working out of the activities of the society; much of the research and writing are carried out in branches or sub-disciplines, though these are not, or should not be, in watertight compartments any more than should be the social sciences as a whole. These include:

Social Geography, with strong links with Sociology (for present purposes including Social Anthropology), and with Demography.

Economic Geography with strong links with economics, but also with earth sciences – for instance agricultural geography with ecology, especially crop ecology and stock ecology.

Political Geography, with strong links with Government or Political Science.

There are at least two overall or complete approaches to human geography: historical geography and regional geography.

Historical Geography

Historical geography naturally uses many of the tools of the historian, sometimes the archaeologist. It is sometimes thought of as the reconstruction of a past geography using these tools and those of a geographer. Sometimes it is claimed as an essential dimension in depth: depth here is the time-dimension for the study of present-day geography whether systematic (social, economic or political) or regional (see Smith in Chorley and Haggett 1965).

Regional Geography

Not many years ago regional geography was often claimed as the summit and even as the inevitable end-product of geographical endeavour. It has more recently been enmeshed in controversy, even fallen into disrepute. Many workers believe that it is impossible to make a holistic study of a region, and object to the mystic overtone of holism – the assumption that the whole is somehow greater than the sum of its parts. Others find the study invalid because there is no universally recognised way of drawing regional boundaries, so that different workers' findings cannot be compared. The region lacks discreteness: a valuable quality if it is to be the subject of scientific analysis. Others urge that the attempt to study all the areal characteristics of a tract of country is overweening (though there is a sense in which almost every systematic study is just as comprehensive and involves the study of just as many variables). Others again say that even if the task is possible, the writing up of the findings is impossibly tedious and unwarrantably shallow. Some, perhaps including you, have found that at least the better written or better taught regional accounts, probably descriptions with some explanations at the level of subjective integration rather than statistical analysis, do lead to some general appreciation of the peculiar qualities of an area, or its peculiar combination of qualities, sometimes described by the evocative if imprecise word – personality. But even so you may have been left dissatisfied, asking for more. Many quite sympathetic critics have found that even the better regional accounts do *not* lead to an appreciation of the widespread, possibly world-wide, mechanisms which have led to the similarities between regions – for instance between one area of heavy industry and another. Indeed, in so far as the regional account aims at establishing uniqueness or personality, it *avoids* establishing similarities. The discussion of both unique and universal traits does not seem inherently impossible – only very rare. Badly written or badly taught regional geography is naturally even more irritating.

Idiographic and Nomothetic Studies, i.e. studies of unique cases as against the widespread, the law-responsive

This contrast between the individual, the unique on the one hand, and the widespread, the law-responsive, the predictable on the other, is seen at several points in this course from different disciplines. The description of individual characteristics is sometimes referred to as idiographic, the analysis of widespread or universal tendencies as nomothetic (Chorley and Haggett, 1967, p. 21).

Regional Geography Re-assessed

Regional geography, then, is seldom now regarded as the core of the discipline. Thus when the present writer was trained, regional geography comprised about half the course leading to an honours geography degree. Today it would not be difficult to find honours schools which include no regional geography. The remaining case for regional geography is sometimes reduced to a plea for school training, up to early secondary school years, as an invaluable background for a wide range of deeper studies, and perhaps in a curiously similar introductory rôle in military geography, or even where the geographer is invoked as a herald to the historian, to set the scene on which the historical drama is to be played out. There may be a somewhat different case, though on the same lines. That is, it may be a legitimate, even a commendable academic exercise, to approach a tract of country without first donning the intellectual blinkers of a specialism (in this argument a specialism within human geography). One may carry out a quite traditional study under the quite old-fashioned 'headings for regional study' – geology, landforms, biogeography, agriculture, forestry, mining, secondary industry, population geography and so on. The level over such a wide area is likely to be that of explanatory description rather than of analysis in depth. And one may hesitate to contemplate putting the whole of this explanatory description down on paper, still more to expect other people to read it all. Nevertheless, condensed forms of presentation do exist. Granted this, the initial approach without blinkers may lead one to the problem particularly appropriate for deeper analysis in depth in that particular area; approaching already wearing the blinkers, on the other hand, may lead to an elaborate analysis not particularly appropriate to the area, or even to forcing data into a procrustean bed of preconceived ideas. (For a recent pro-regional viewpoint, see R. Minshull, 1967.)

Regional Geography to Regional Analysis

Despite this widespread trend, it is clear that many aspects of areas delimited on some useful basis for political or planning purposes can be usefully analysed and even synthesised, using modern techniques, and under the name of Regional Analysis a good deal of work is going on, especially on the border-land between geography and economics (Isard, 1960). Much regional analysis might well be assigned to applied geography; indeed all branches of human geography, as of physical geography, do lend themselves to application in practical affairs such as town and country planning, regional planning, locational and market studies for industry and commerce, and the like.

Eclecticism or Borrowing in Geography

As one might expect, social, economic and political geography have links with the sister disciplines of sociology, economics and government or political science. In part geography is an eclectic or borrowing discipline, but it can claim spatial analysis as its core (without claiming a monopoly) and as a substantial contribution to the social sciences and to solving practical problems. Since many decisions on social, economic and political problems involve a spatial element, applied geography is often invoked, singly or, commonly, along with one or more sister disciplines. For example, urban redevelopment and over-spill, the location of new or expanding industries, and the rearrangement of local government boundaries may be usefully analysed by social, economic and political geographers respectively, preferably as members of an inter-disciplinary team. (See, for instance, Jackson, 1963.)

Human Geography as Spatial Analysis; the apparently independent existence of large cities in relation to local resources

Many modern human geographers, however, take a somewhat different stand: that their proper field is the description and causal analysis of areal distribution patterns on the ground and therefore involving some relationships with the environment – strong in a primary industry like farming, relatively weaker in *local* relationships in the case of a great modern city, metropolis or conurbation. For their basis of subsistence, often affluence, such cities may have relatively tenuous links with the local environment. And though granted we are so far all dependent on the resources of Planet Earth, these large and complex settlements often seem to have a kind of independent existence of their own, only rarely interrupted sufficiently seriously by some breakdown or catastrophe even to cause widespread assessment in depth of their bases and future development. A few voices in the wilderness are excepted like Lewis Mumford or Fraser Darling or Jean Gottmann (see Mumford 1938, Darling 1969, Gottmann and Harper 1967).

For some scholars areal differences – *uniqueness* of this or that area – form the main object of study; for others, including workers on the main growing points of the subject at present, it is the study of *similarities* of pattern that forms the core (idiographic cf. nomothetic, see p. 103).

If few are ready to claim the formulation of laws concerning spatial patterns, organisation, and systems, many are ready to construct and reconstruct models and reconstruct again, until the model approximates better and better to the real world, so adding to understanding, and possibly knowledge of causes, good enough to act as a basis for prediction.[1]

Human geography, then, studies patterns on the ground of some kind: areal distribution patterns, or flow patterns, or trend patterns. And because they occupy more or less ground (or sea or atmosphere) physical-environment factors may be involved as partial causes – as we noted earlier. For instance, more vegetables are grown on the lighter sands of the northern fen country of England, more cereals in the southern fen country with artificially drained peat soils. But sheer distance – two-dimensional space as such – may be involved through such a simple, fundamental factor as increasing costs of transport with distance – the friction of distance, as it has been called. Equally with the physical-environmental factors, the spatial interactions of the man-created environment, the cultural landscape in a broad sense, may underlie an areal distribution pattern. The implications of distance for rural land use patterns are studied in Unit 19.

From Judgement to Analytical Method; a rapprochement between physical and human geography

The last decade has seen a movement towards greater analytical depth in human geography. This is a move away from arts-type use of the judgement of a skilled and experienced worker, a move away from subjective integration – though these approaches remain essential. Skill, experience, judgement, integration will never go out of fashion merely because additional tools like computers are available. They are essential in the selection and design of research projects and in the interpretation of results. Common sense or *nous*[2] is no longer enough – apart from being rather uncommon! – but it is needed, never more, if only to avoid nonsense projects, over-elaborate investigations of problems soluble by simple techniques and so on.

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[1] At this point the student may wish to refer to points made in the radio programmes, linked with these first five units, concerning the aims of the social sciences. Next week in the last of the five units he should certainly be assessing the approaches of the different disciplines using these and other yardsticks.

[2] *Nous* (from Greek), mind or intellect (in Greek philosophy); colloquially common sense or gumption (*Concise O.E.D.*, 1964).

The move is towards the techniques of the social sciences, and in part towards scientific method as practised by the physical and life sciences. In this way the last decade has, interestingly enough, seen a drawing together of the two sides of geography, physical and human, despite the increasing specialism which pulls them apart and, a few years ago, seemed to suggest imminent dichotomy within the discipline. This is partly because analogies between widely separated branches of the subject have proved fruitful in research. Within my own field of specialism, medical geography, the diffusion of an epidemic has proved susceptible to analysis by analogy with, on the one hand, the spread of rumours (A. Rapoport 1951, 1952) and, on the other, the spread of electronic waves through a network of circuits (Chappell and Webber 1970).

Rapoport decided that rumours were easier for experimental purposes than are epidemics, so he worked out a mathematical formula or mathematical model which simulated the *main* factors determining the spread of rumours, then showed that the model could be useful in the interpretation of epidemics. Thus an analogue can become a model. An analogue computer, as compared with a digital computer for computation, etc., can also be used to simulate the spread of a rumour, an innovation, or an epidemic. Chappell and Webber constructed a simple analogue computer which represented by an electronic network the postulated routes of spread of an epidemic along highways, railways and airways, and allowed for the different intensities of traffic flow, the different degrees of resistance to the disease through differing community immunity, the different age structures, etc.

This rapprochement is partly also because there remain important matters where practical issues demand a revival of traditional academic interest in the relations between men and the physical (though man-altered) environment. This is true of conservation of natural environments and natural resources, whether viewed as mere conservation for posterity or as optimal development for posterity (W. L. Thomas Jr. (Ed.) 1956). Though this field cannot be developed in this unit, introducing geography within a School of Social Sciences, it may well be developed by a student interested in taking courses in both the Social and the Earth Sciences (or possibly in the future by inter-line or inter-faculty courses).

Relationships in Spatial Analysis

Relationships are studied then: man–land, man–physical environment, man–cultural landscape or society–total environment. Methods of study now cover a wide spectrum, of various degrees of sophistication. Geography is perhaps a science of understanding rather than discovery, now that the age of exploration of the earth is virtually closed – or it may be an art like medicine or engineering. It has made some important discoveries, and both discoveries and understanding have probably accomplished most by relatively simple methods, one might say classic methods, such as comparing maps of different areal distribution patterns in the search for causal relations. A few years ago common sense was used to dismiss the obvious nonsense explanations. For example, in the 1920s, de Geer did not explain the limits of the industrial region of North East United States by the close approximation to it of the limits of the Ben Peach apple, for common sense suggested that the apple was grown because of the industrial area. But statistical thinking, for instance, about dependent and independent variables has added a great deal of power to discriminate among more plausible explanations than in that example, though systematised common sense surely plays its part. (Statistical methods, misused, have also *promoted* nonsense explanations – the *reductio ad absurdum* is perhaps the alleged correlation exercise establishing a strong correlation coefficient between arms and legs in a certain country – therefore arms *cause* legs (O. H. K. Spate, verbal communication, 1968).) To be fair, shilly-shallying arts-type question-raising can be almost equally absurd – "Could it be that . . .?"

There are always some society-land relations, always some society-space relations. Thus agriculture involves very obvious society-land relations, with local climate, and even more intimate variations of soil texture, drainage and inherent fertility. But agriculture also illustrates interaction with a wide variety of economic factors, and these include society–space relations in that the friction of distance (noted above) affects economic rent, land values and cropping patterns in ways discussed later in this course (Unit 19), through transport costs and transport accessibility. To take a simple example, market gardening tends to occur around large cities on a wide variety of soil types; farther away it occurs on favourable sites for early maturing of vegetables, flowers and fruit, given accessibility to good transport. Try testing this generalisation for yourself.

Broad relationships with climatic zones and the associated *broad* patterns of soil types may influence the particular kind of social, economic and political development. (Here we return briefly to the physical determinist hypothesis.) Thus cities first arose, some five thousand years ago, in the riverine plains of the Old World – in a 'region of increment' as it has been called (Fleure, 1917–18), an area wherein it is relatively easy to gain more than a bare subsistence from the soil (at low to medium densities of population). But cities arose in this particular region of increment which is also at a cross-roads of movement of people and of ideas across the centuries and the millennia; the first urban revolution of five thousand years ago occurred in these Old World riverine plains rather than comparable environments elsewhere, for instance in Australia or the Americas, though the latter did have highly developed urban civilisations before Columbus, of rather different origins. (For an interesting modern review of the dawn of civilisation in the Old World and in the Americas see East, 1965.) The favourable physical environments may have been a necessary but were not a sufficient condition.

Society–land relations in simpler economies may be less sensitive to all but extreme variations in local soil types as compared with a technically advanced capitalist agriculture. Soil differences are known to subsistence and capitalist farmers alike but are perceived in different contexts. The prevalent means of subsistence farming may blanket an area, whereas capitalist farmers may match the crops to suitable environments according to the comparative advantages of particular areas. Thus before the Highland Clearances in Scotland, 'lazybeds' (that is hand-turned ridges) were used for growing oats and potatoes over a wider tract of raised beach, river terrace and lower hill-slope than is now used for tillage, for winter sheep-fodder, by capitalist farmers on the cleared land. In fact many old cultivation ridges now provide winter grazing for the breeding ewes. The sheep-farmer's field of oats, clover and (decreasingly) turnips may be concentrated on a well-drained raised beach or river terrace; here for the time being a physical determinist hypothesis operates more strongly than in the economically simpler society.

In the search for explanation of society's spatial patterns of various kinds, it is often helpful to look for systems, the various parts of which are related together in some form of flow patterns or network – a river system like the Thames and its tributaries in physical geography; a flow along a transport or market network in human geography. Hence our emphasis on Networks and Systems in this week's work (see comments on p. 98 of the main text of this unit). If you have time for further reading try Hagget, 1965, or at a more advanced level Harvey, 1969.

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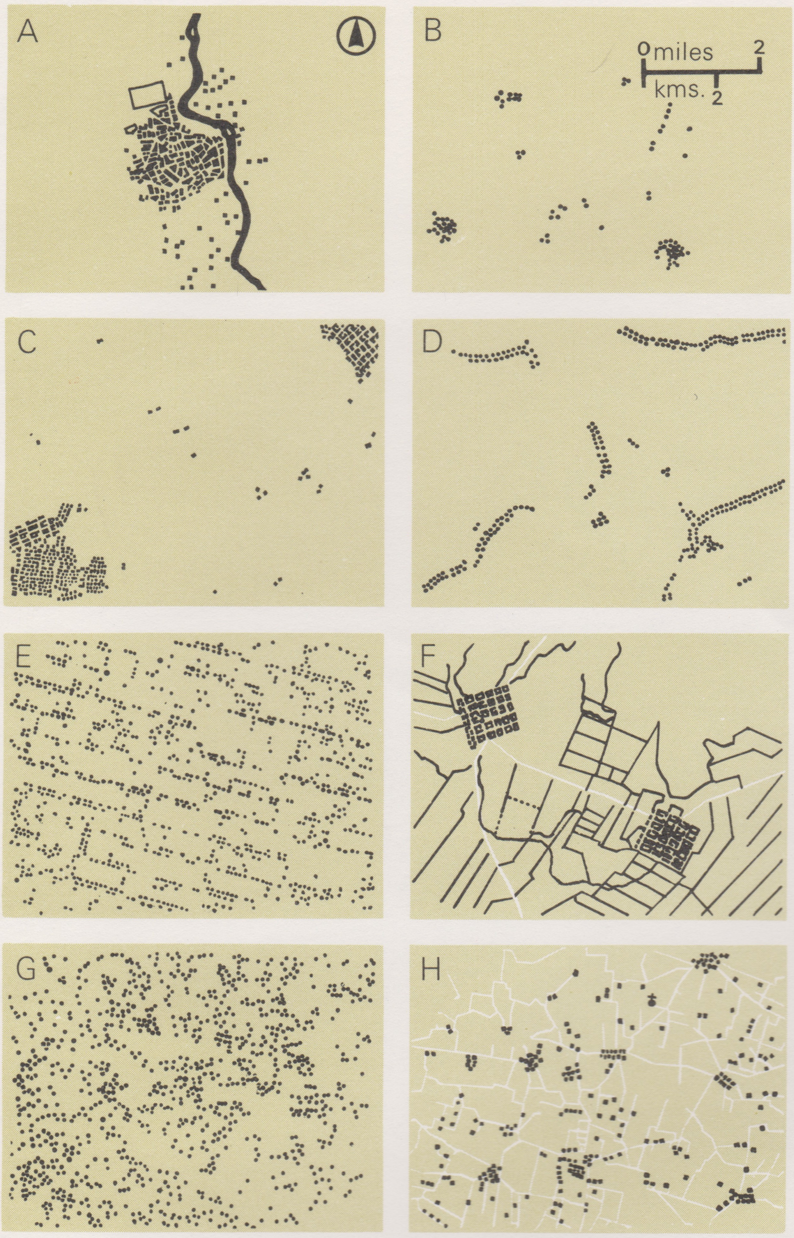


Fig. 1

A	Large Mediterranean Village	Spain
B	Small Mediterranean Village	Greece
C	Danubian Village	
D	Elongated Street Village	Yugoslavia
E	Dispersed Corti and Street Villages	N. Italy
F	Gridiron Danubian Villages	
G	Dispersed Settlements	Spain
H	Irregular Nucleated Villages	E. Denmark

Settlement Types in Europe

From Figure 17, p. 104 in J. M. Houston, *A Social Geography of Europe*,
London, Duckworth, 1963.

The nucleated or concentrated type of village in A, B, C, D, E, F, and H is partly a matter of tradition, partly a matter of descent from an open field cultivation probably once communal, and in some places it is easy to think of concentration for water supply and defence (the Mediterranean, the Hungarian plain). A, B, C and H all show some dispersion, probably later dispersion from the concentrated pattern – perhaps associated with more peaceful times and possibly also with individual holdings when fenced or still open. The street village form of D and E is partly a matter of tradition – sometimes of drier sites on embankments or ridges.

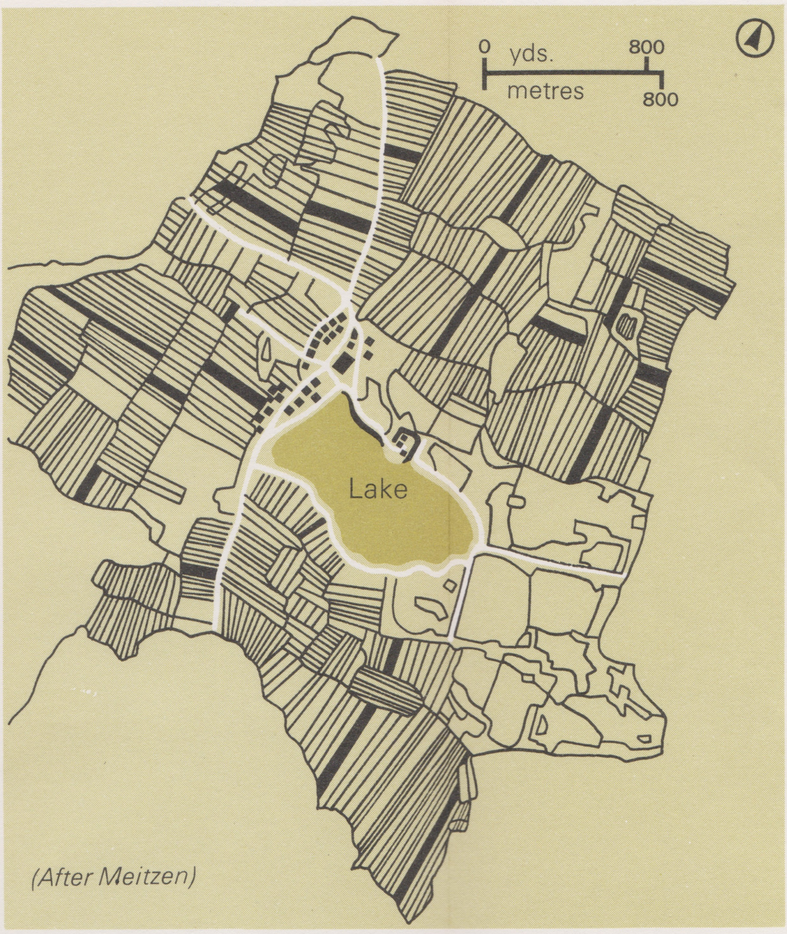


Fig. 2 Thorsjö, Sweden
Black strips are the holdings of one proprietor distributed according to the practice of **'solskift'**.

Strip Field Patterns

After Figure 1, p. 51 in J. M. Houston, *A Social Geography of Europe*, London, Duckworth, 1963.

The patterns of scattered strip-like fields are often a relic of a former open field (and more or less communal) system of agriculture. The strips are usually now individually held, still open, or sometimes fenced or hedged. If they are open, some operations, like grazing stock on stubble, may still have to be agreed communally. The scattering is clearly a cause of loss of efficiency, causing much needless travelling with equipment and draught animals or tractors. Campaigns for consolidation of such holdings have been common in continental Europe in recent years, and in under-developed countries like India and Pakistan, where rather similar patterns of holdings are common. These patterns are commonly associated with a more or less nucleated form of settlement.

The grid-iron pattern is sometimes a matter of a surveyed estate village or colonial village or small town (as in Australia). There are sociological implications of such differences in living patterns, not necessarily well worked out – a concentrated pattern appears more sociable than a dispersed pattern or even a street village. Patterns change; for instance in Australia and North America homesteads on farms may be occupied only at busy seasons; the land is worked by 'suitcase farmers' living in nearby, or even fairly distant, towns to get social and educational facilities, commuting to the farm when necessary by car or even by plane.

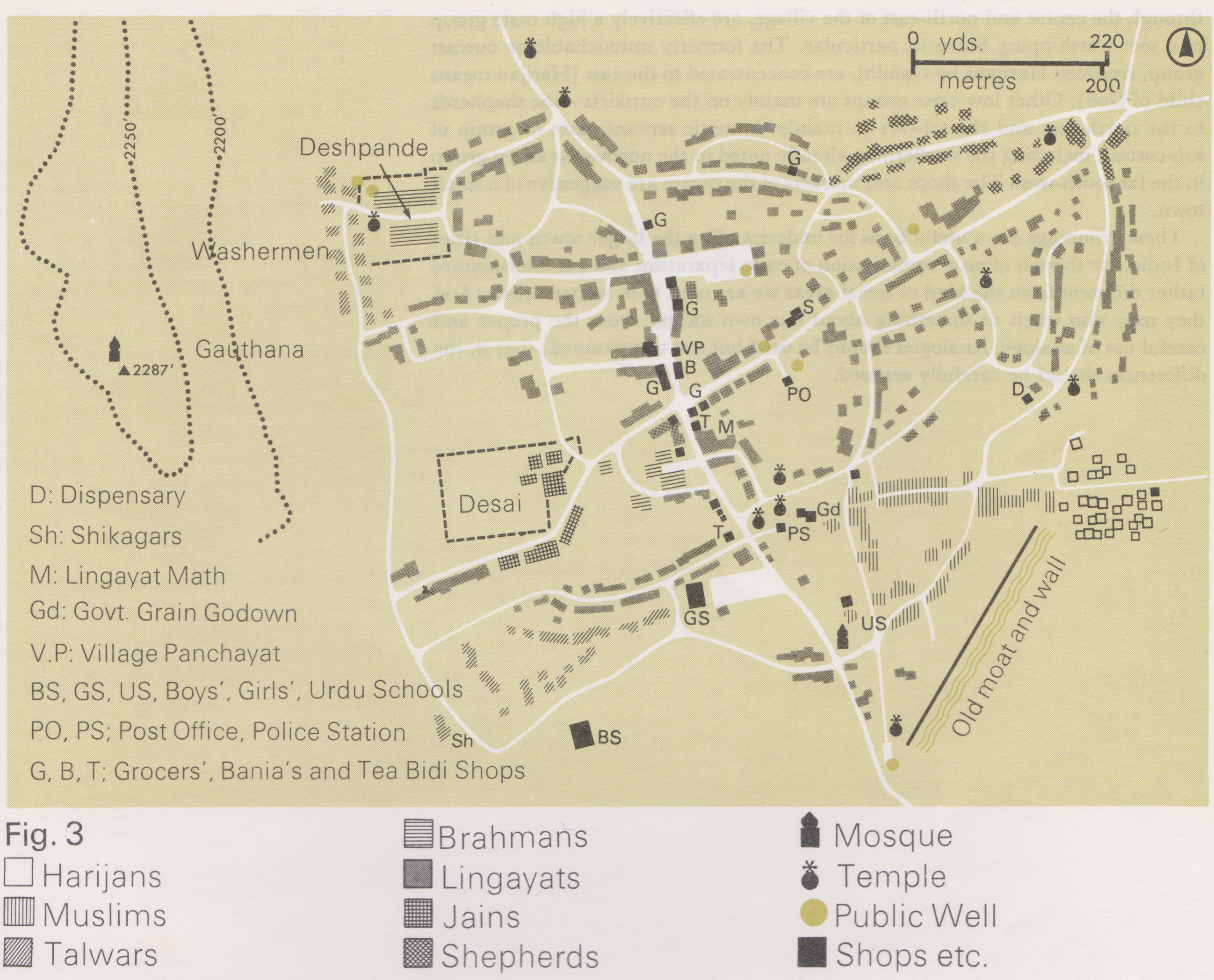

0 yds. 220
metres 200
Deshpande
Washermen
Gauthana
2250'
2200'
▲2287'
Desai
Old moat and wall
G
S
VP
B
T
M
PO
PS
Gd
D
US
GS
BS
Sh
D: Dispensary
Sh: Shikagars
M: Lingayat Math
Gd: Govt. Grain Godown
V.P: Village Panchayat
BS, GS, US, Boys', Girls', Urdu Schools
PO, PS; Post Office, Police Station
G, B, T; Grocers', Bania's and Tea Bidi Shops
☐ Harijans
▥ Muslims
▨ Talwars
▤ Brahmans
■ Lingayats
▦ Jains
▩ Shepherds
Mosque
Temple
● Public Well
■ Shops etc.

Fig. 3

A Village in Detail

From O. H. K. Spate, with a contribution by C. D. Deshpande, 'The Indian Village', *Geography*, 37, 1952, 142–52, Figure 4. This is an article well worth reading if you have access to this journal, also Figure 7.1, p. 200 in O. H. K. Spate and A. T. A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*, London, Methuen, 3rd Edition 1967 (see pp. 199–203 and see note by Dr. L. S. Bhat on pp. 220–2).

This is a 700-year-old village on the Deccan lava plateau near Dharwar, Maharashtra State, India. It was formerly walled and moated, and uses the black cotton soils for a traditional agriculture founded on jowar (*Sorghum vulgare*, a tall millet with fairly large grain), cotton, and increasingly groundnut. The name is Muslim, roughly Anim's well, and the place was of some importance in the former kingdom of Bijapur. But in recent years the village finds itself increasingly within the urban orbit of Dharwar, about 150 people commuting daily by bus for work and other purposes, while Dharwar people carry out cultivation in village lands. Still the purpose of our map remains relevant, despite changes in the twenty years since it was drawn.

The caste system of India, more rigid than many comparable systems of social stratification, allows us to see the tendency for even a large village to have shopping and caste quarters. The formerly ruling Muslims (not of course a caste as such) are concentrated, with their Urdu school, in the south-east. Dominant caste groups are: (1) Jains, effectively a high caste group of Hindu reformism roughly contemporary with Buddha (that is some 2500 years ago) and with some resemblances to Buddhism in doctrine; the Jains are grouped in the west centre of the village: (2) the Brahmins, the main priestly caste, are to the north-west and in the centre – the former area bearing the same name as the distinguished geographer who originally surveyed the village with his students. Rather significantly the washermen (low caste but ritually essential in Hindu tradition) are nearby. These groups include most of the formerly all-powerful Inams or landlords whose *wadas* (roughly manor-houses) loom above more humble neighbours. The Lingayats, well spread through the centre and north-east of the village, are effectively a high caste group of a sect worshipping Shiva in particular. The formerly untouchable or outcast group, renamed Harijans by Gandhi, are concentrated to the east (Harijan means child of God). Other low caste groups are mainly on the outskirts – the shepherds to the north-east and the talwars (a mainly domestic servant caste or group of sub-castes), including the washermen already noted in the north-west and a group in the far south-west. The shops and markets of the centre are suggestive of a small town.

These groupings are a useful basis for understanding the larger towns and cities of India, for there is often a combination of caste separatism and yet intermixture rather different from the kind of social areas we are used to in western cities. And they may also teach us something about our own society, from the proper and careful use of analogy. Analogies should be used but not overstrained; that is, the differences should be carefully assessed.

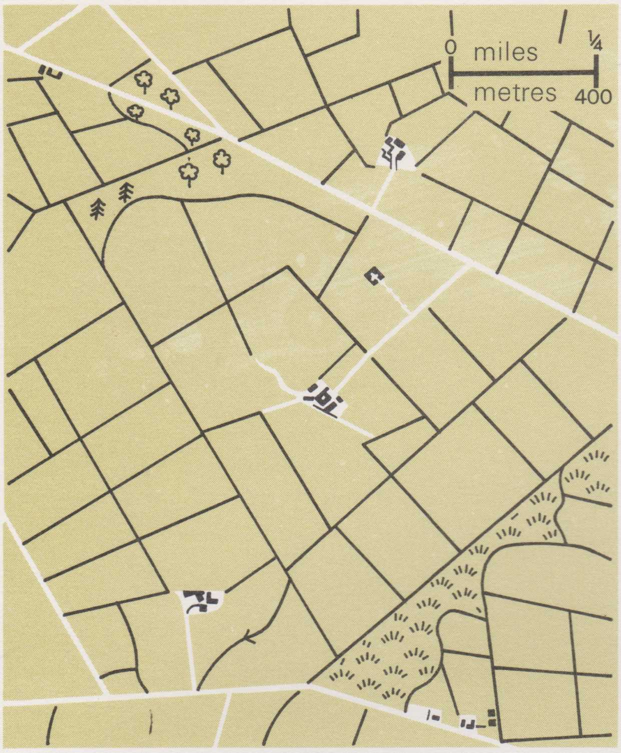


Fig. 4 Annan, Dumfriesshire
Tends to be associated with isolated farms amid their own fields.

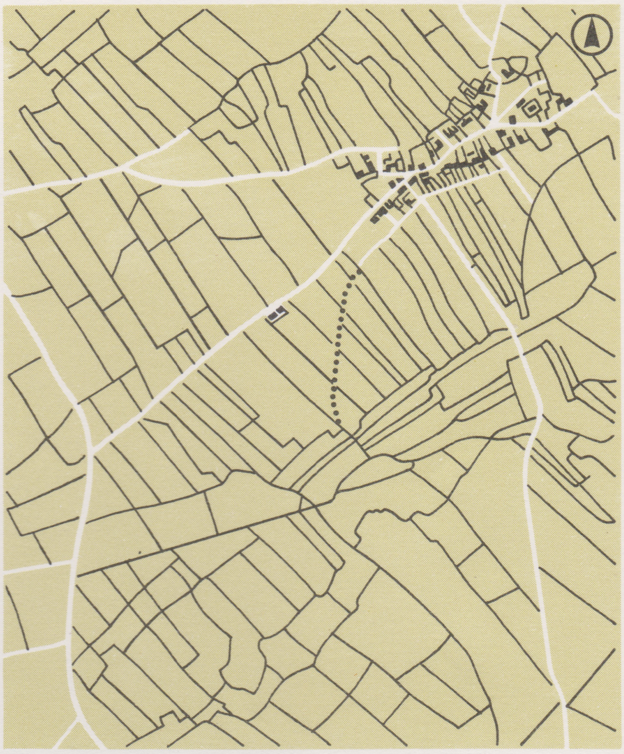


Fig. 5 Gilcrux, Cumberland
Associated with nucleated farm villages with farmsteads in the village street.

Field Boundary Patterns

After Figure 2, p. 52 in J. M. Houston, *A Social Geography of Europe*, London, Duckworth, 1963.

These are from early research by Houston himself on the English and Scottish sides of the Solway lowlands. Gilcrux has strip-like hedged or fenced fields, and some quite scattered holdings. There are farmsteads in the village street, though it is a fairly well-spread rather than a continuously built-up one. In terms of Figure 4.8, this is an evolved landscape, as against the replanned landscape of Figure 4.4. Here in Dumfriesshire there are isolated farms, with a terraced row of farm workers' cottages, amidst the almost square fields, re-surveyed and replanned on enclosure, probably much later than in Gilcrux: in fact probably in the early 19th century. Clearly the groupings are less sociable. There are villages, but few are evolved like Gilcrux. Quite commonly they were also planned at the time of enclosure and the agricultural revolution as small industrial or craft villages. The impact of the industrial revolution was such that few remained industrial, and they lived on as retirement and small service centres, with increasing holiday traffic today if they are suitably placed.

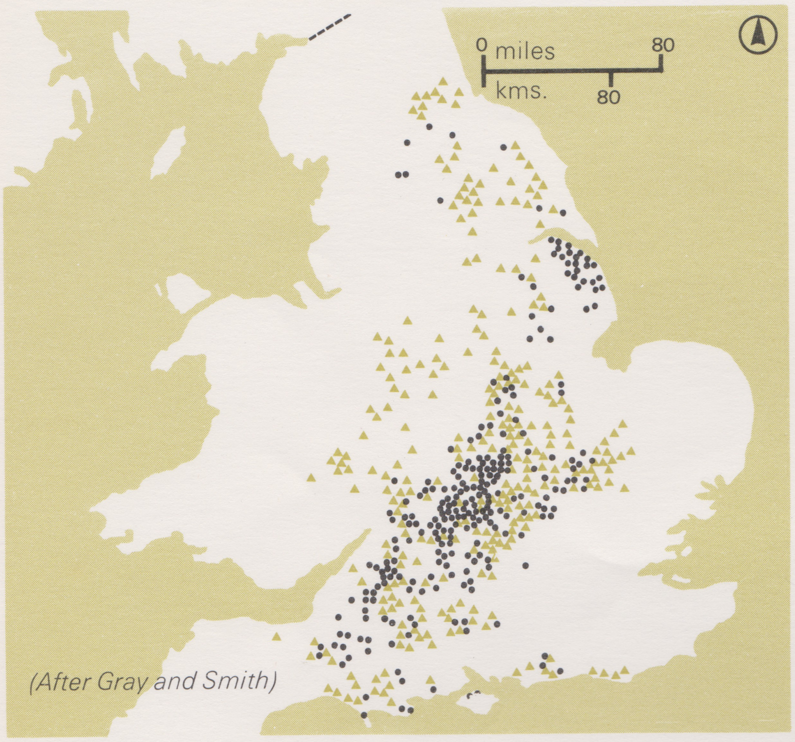


Fig. 6a ● Two field ▲ Three field

Distribution of Two and Three Field Systems

After Figures 7 and 8, p. 70 in J. M. Houston, *A Social Geography of Europe*, London, Duckworth, 1963.

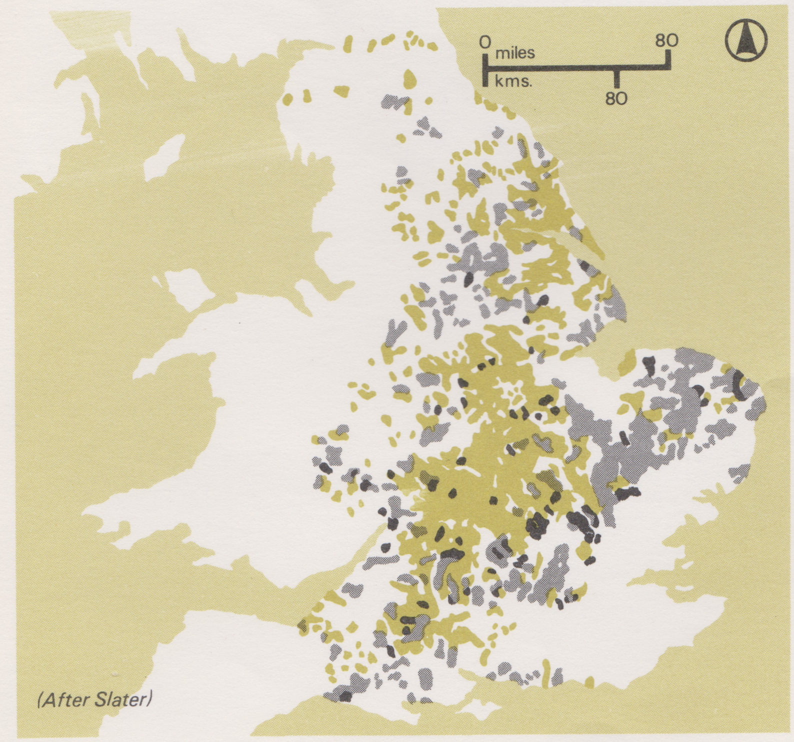
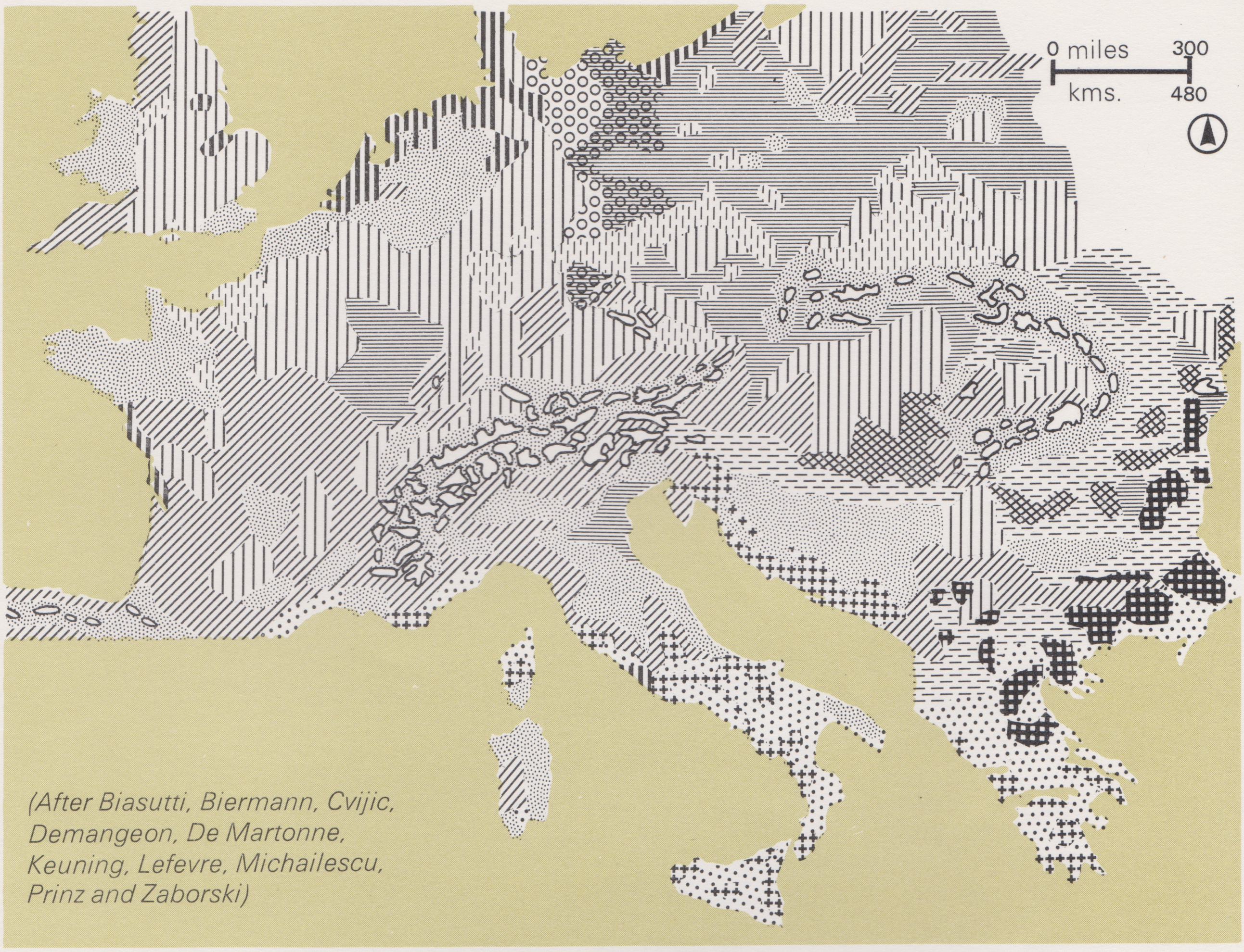


Fig. 6b

- 🟨 Enclosed before the General Enclosure Act of 1801
- ▨ Enclosed between 1802 and 1845
- ■ Enclosed under the General Enclosure Act of 1845

Parliamentary Enclosure of Common Fields

These are included for the student unfamiliar with these distribution patterns. They give some guidance as to where in England and Wales one may expect to find villages evolved from nucleated villages formerly based on an open field system of two or three fields. (Also the marks on the ground showing house foundations, etc., of 'lost villages' – but that is another story.) The enclosure acts of various periods give an overlapping distribution. Figures 4.6 (a) and 4.6 (b) will again give the student some idea of where to look for modification of old field patterns, perhaps complete replanning.


0 miles 300
kms. 480
Ⓝ
⬚ Large Mediterranean villages and towns
⊞ Small Mediterranean villages
▥ Irregular nucleated villages
▤ Street villages
○ Round villages
▥ Forest villages and hamlets
▥ Polder and fen villages
▩ Gridiron Danubian villages
▤ Loosely grouped villages
▦ Square Turkish villages
▨ Hamlets and farms
▒ Dispersed settlements
☐ Uninhabited areas

(After Biasutti, Biermann, Cvijic, Demangeon, De Martonne, Keuning, Lefevre, Michailescu, Prinz and Zaborski)

Fig. 7

Settlement Types in Europe

After Figure 16, p. 103 in J. M. Houston, *A Social Geography of Europe*, London, Duckworth, 1963.

The main point for the student is to link the types mapped for England and Wales with continental Europe – the irregular, nucleated villages (and two and three field systems) of much of England with a belt stretching east from the Paris basin, or the dispersed settlements of Wales with those of Brittany. He can also link the types shown in our Figure 4.1 with broader distribution patterns – the large Mediterranean villages and towns for example.

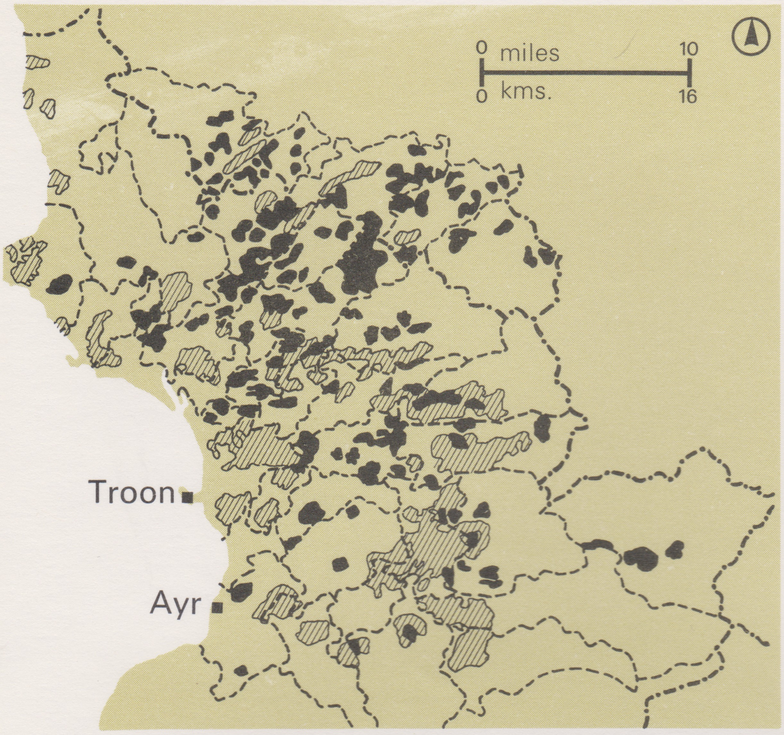

0 miles 10
0 kms. 16
Troon
Ayr

Fig. 8 ■ Evolved areas ▨ Replanned areas

Evolved and Replanned Lands

After Figure 2, p. 104 in J. H. G. Lebon, 'The Process of Enclosure in the Western Lowlands', *Scottish Geog. Mag.* **62** (3) 1946.

The western lowlands of Scotland show this intermixture, shown in detail in Figures 4.9, 4.10 (a) and 4.10 (b). In contrast the eastern lowlands are generally more radically replanned landscapes, comparable to Figure 4.4 or 4.9 though these are both in the west.

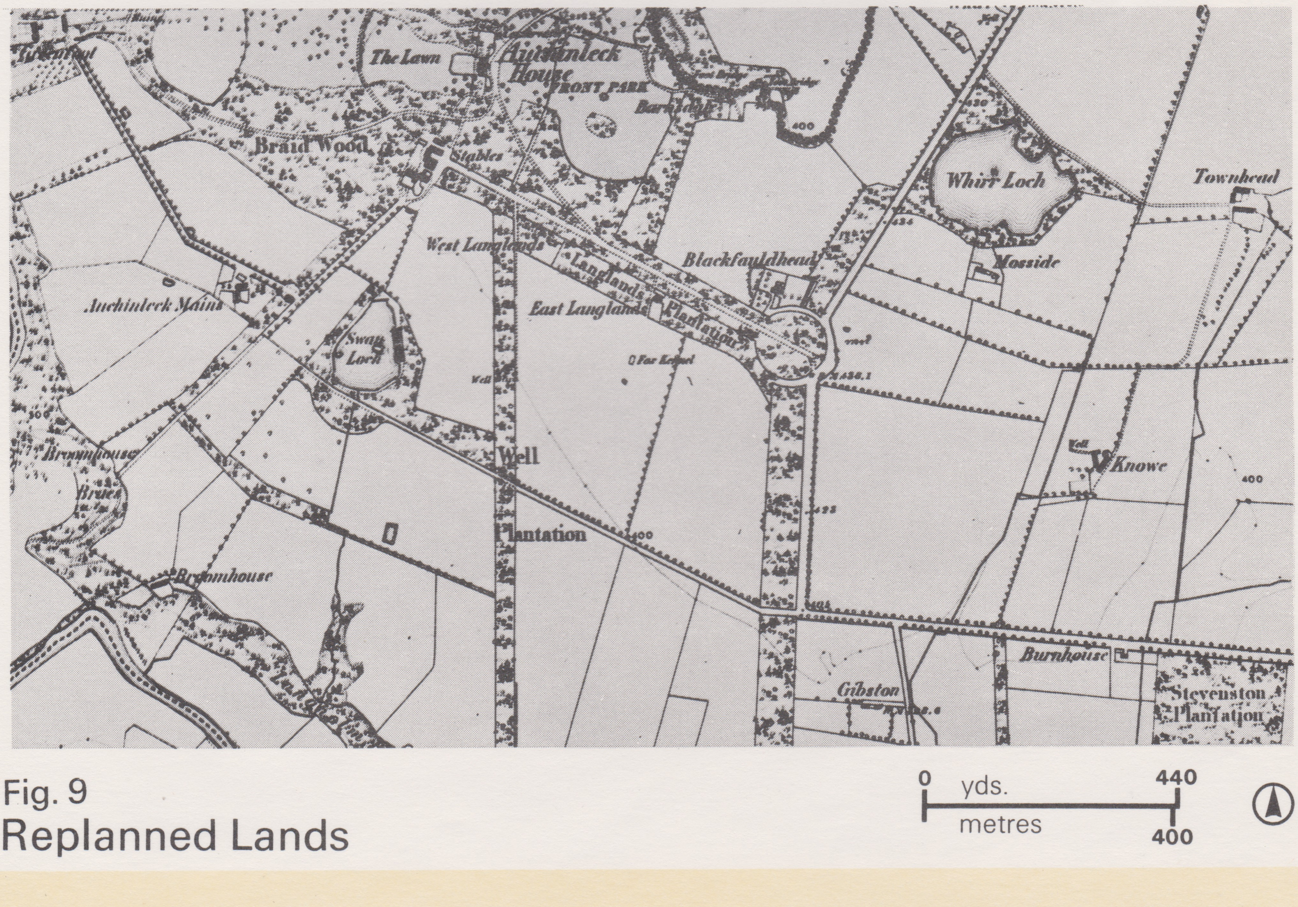

The Lawn
Auchinleck House
Front Park
Braid Wood
Stables
Whirr Loch
Townhead
West Langlands
Langlands Plantation
Blackfauldhead
Mosside
East Langlands
Auchinleck Mains
Swan Loch
Well
Plantation
Knowe
Broomhouse
Burnhouse
Gibston
Stevenston Plantation
0 yds. 440
metres 400

Fig. 9

Replanned Lands

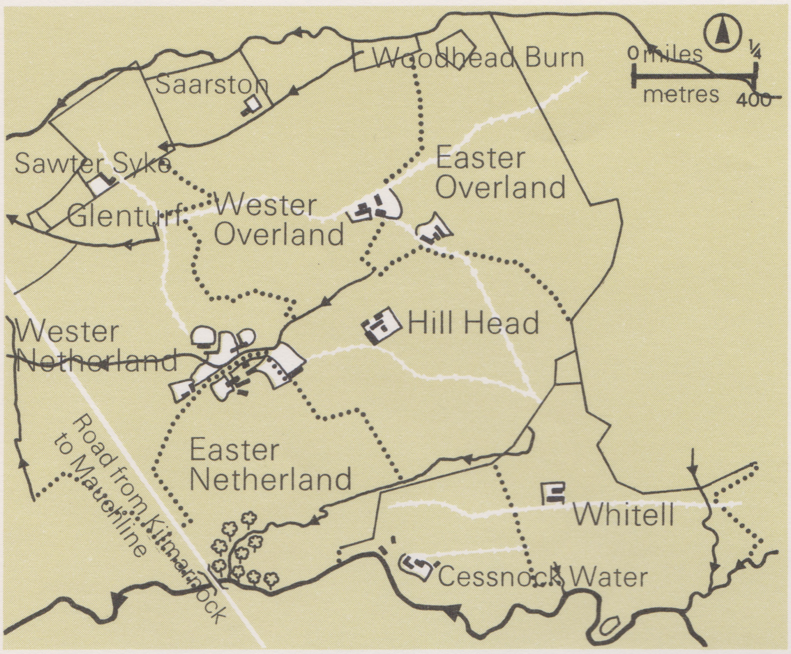

Woodhead Burn
0 miles ¼
metres 400
Saarston
Sawter Syke
Glenturf
Wester Overland
Easter Overland
Hill Head
Wester Netherland
Easter Netherland
Road from Kilmarnock to Mauchline
Whitell
Cessnock Water

Fig. 10a
Evolved Lands before Enclosure

After Figures 2 and 3, pp. 12–13 in J. H. G. Lebon, 'The Face of the Countryside in Central Ayrshire in the 18th and 19th Centuries', *Scottish Geog. Mag.* **62** (1) 1946.

The scattered field pattern could not be shown on this map. The interested student will find examples in Third (1955) and in Lebon (1952).

The names and some of the road patterns and field boundaries can be recognised. The fields are rational in shape, but smaller and less regular than in Figure 4.9, and lacking the manipulation of the landscape to make it part of a large estate, for amenity purposes, etc.

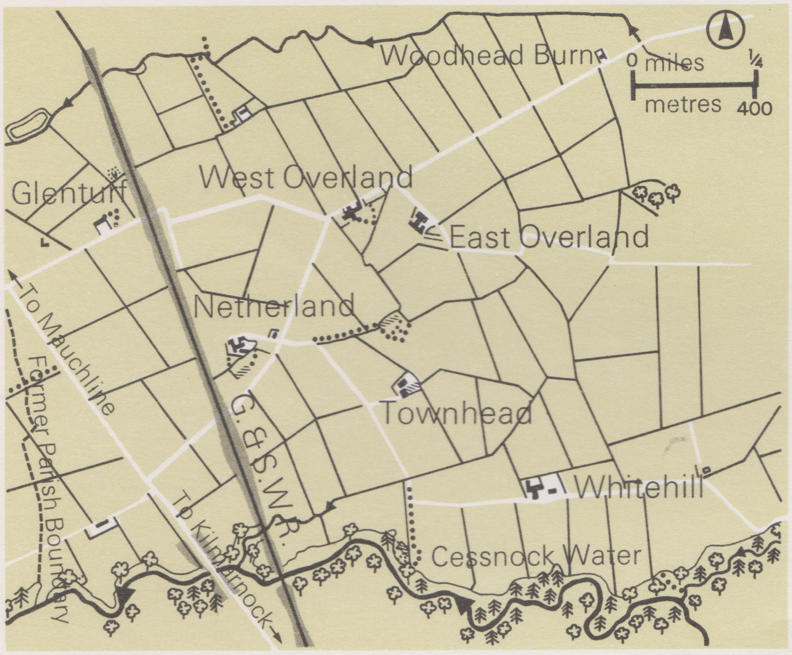

Woodhead Burn
0 miles ¼
metres 400
Glenturf
West Overland
East Overland
Netherland
To Mauchline
Former Parish Boundary
G. & S.W.R.
Townhead
Whitehill
To Kilmarnock
Cessnock Water

Fig. 10b
Evolved Lands after Enclosure

After Figure 1, p. 102 in J. H. G. Lebon, 'The Process of Enclosure in the Western Lowlands', *Scottish Geog. Mag.* **62** (3) 1946.

Old names remain, but the more or less rectilineal fields, the strip-like plantations for amenity, sport and shelter, and the straight and probably re-routed road pattern are all typical of such replanned areas.

Unit 5

Man as a Social Animal

CONTENTS UNIT 5

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 114

1 INTRODUCTION 115

2 BUSHMAN SOCIETY 119

3 STREET CORNER SOCIETY 127

4 CONCLUSION 130

BIBLIOGRAPHY 138

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources for material used in this unit:

ELIZABETH THOMAS, 1959, *The Harmless People*, Secker and Warburg; *Camera Press Ltd.*, Fig. 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.14, 5.15, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19; *Keystone Press Agency Ltd.*, Fig. 5.13, 5.16.

The illustration on page 111 is by courtesy of *Camera Press Ltd.*

MAN AS A SOCIAL ANIMAL

1 INTRODUCTION

In previous discussions we have met a number of different answers to the question "Why do people live in societies?" There have been psychological and biological explanations; economic explanations about the need for the division of labour and hence society; and a variety of explanations in political and geographical terms. These are the kinds of reasons suggested, respectively, by psychologists, economists, political philosophers and geographers.

But now we come to yet another explanation. This is that "Man lives in society because this is the natural thing for him to do". As Aristotle put it, "Man is a social animal".[1] This is the way a sociologist tends to approach the question of why people live in society.[2]

In one way this answer is circular. It perhaps gives us no new information about why man lives in society to be told (in effect) "Man naturally just *does* live in societies". Sociologists in fact take this as self-evidently true – so self-evident that it doesn't really need discussing. It is the axiom on which their whole discipline is founded. And this is merely another way of saying it is true by definition (in other words, circular or tautological).

But even if it is in one way circular, this answer is also interesting and important. First the very fact that sociologists *do* take this statement as self-evident is itself significant. Sociologists, for instance, think it is not sufficient to regard man as primarily *economic* (as economists do) or as analysable in *individual* terms (as they suggest psychologists do). For instance even in situations where there are obvious economic motives, sociologists like to remind us that non-economic factors are relevant also – that man is also a *social* animal. They point to the effect of such things as man's social obligations and the kinds of socially acceptable beliefs dominant in a given culture and suggest that unless these too are taken into account we have not got the whole picture.

There is another way that this sociologist's approach is a distinct one. Some of the other approaches assumed that we need to *account* for the existence of society. Hobbes, for instance, seemed to suggest a *reason* for society coming into being: for self-protection and to end the continual war of man against man; and other political philosophers have also followed this kind of line. Economists tend to explain society in terms of the need for production based on the division of labour or for more effective use of material resources. So too with geography: again reasons (of a geographical kind this time) are suggested to explain why men live in spatially defined societies. In each case, some kind of utilitarian *explanation* is suggested for the existence of society. Society is necessary, it is implied, for self-protection, for economic production, for material subsistence and so on.[1] But the sociologists take quite a different line. There is no need to try to explain 'society' at all – for society is natural. In other words it is a basic characteristic of human beings to form social groups and live in societies. Sociologists don't deny that there are advantages to man living in society and would certainly accept many of the points made in the earlier units. But none of these, they consider, come to the root of the matter. Society is natural and does not need special explanation to account for it.

---

[1] This phrase is sometimes rendered 'Man is a political animal', but 'Man is a social animal' is a more accurate translation of the Greek.

[2] A distinction is sometimes made between 'sociology' (broadly, the study of industrial societies) and 'social anthropology' (the study of non-industrial societies); at other times 'sociology' is used in a wide sense to cover both of these. It is the second, wider, sense of the term that is used here.

This point may become clearer if we consider the alternative. What would it be like for man *not* to live in society?

In one way, our immediate reaction is that such a question is nonsensical. And this reaction in itself helps to bring home to us that living in society tends to be an inseparable part of our very concept of man. This is another way of saying that "Man is a social animal" is true by definition. At another level, we can invoke empirical evidence on this question. There are some documented cases of people being brought up in isolation from human society. For example, two Indian children of about eight and two were discovered in a wolf den in 1920. The elder (Kamala) survived for some years after discovery. She had acquired almost none of the behaviour we normally regard as human. She had no language in the human sense (only wolflike growls), she could walk only on all fours, and she had no idea of human selfhood or of any social relationship to human beings. Indeed she was as distrustful of humans as any wild animal. In the nine years she then spent in human society she slowly acquired some simple human attributes. But in her case, and similar ones that have been studied, her development as a *human* was dependent on membership of human society: it could not develop in isolation.[2]

The point that emerges is that an individual who is brought up away from human society never really becomes a human being at all. He is without the culture and without the social relations which are part of our definition of human-ness. Men cannot be men if they live alone.

People sometimes speak of "opting out of society" and here, it might seem, there *is* the possibility of man choosing to live outside society. We hear, for instance, of groups of hippies and so on setting up their own communities outside American society. But it will not do to take a case like this too literally. In the first place, they are in fact setting up a *community*, a little society of their own with its own culture and social relations. They may be opting out of American society or one kind of American society (though even that is questionable) but they are not opting out of society in general. Secondly, just because they have been socialised into the ways of the society they have been brought up in they in a way take that society *with* them even when they reject certain of its values. Society in one sense is already *in* them, part of them, and they cannot opt out of it. Even the ideals about rejecting certain values or living 'away' from modern urban society are shared with others and are part of the socially accepted ideals of one group in contemporary society. As Berger puts it in his *Invitation to Sociology*,[1] "Society not only determines what we do but also what we are" (Berger 1966, p. 111).

---

[1] These are the types of explanation referred to as 'reductionist' in P. Worsley (ed.). *Introducing Modern Sociology*, Penguin, 1970 (set book), pp. 26 ff.

[2] For some further examples of these so-called 'feral cases' see the *Reader*, pp. 138–53 and R. M. MacIver and C. H. Page, *Society*, London, Macmillan, 1962 edition, pp. 44 ff.

The conclusion here is that we never in fact encounter 'bare man': man outside society. It is misleading to assume that human beings are, or could ever become, human beings outside society (as was assumed by some of the 'contract theorists' discussed in Unit 2). As will emerge even more clearly in the psychology units that follow, even the development of individual personality depends on the individual's socialisation *into society*.

In other words, when we try to consider the *alternatives* to man's living in society it becomes clear that both the very concept of 'man' as a human being and what empirical evidence is available all tend to the same conclusion: that man is only man when he lives with others, in society.

Having looked at the statement in terms of its possible alternatives, let us now try to develop it more positively. What exactly does "Man is a social animal" imply? It is when we elaborate this idea constructively that the contribution of sociology becomes clearer.

Three main points are implied in the sociologist's picture of man as naturally social. These can only really emerge in the examples that come later, but they can be mentioned briefly to set the scene.

First, there is the insistence that people naturally live in societies (or at any rate social groups[2]) marked by social relationships between individuals.[3] Even in the most inauspicious conditions (like a prison, a lunatic asylum, or a desert habitat) sociologists can point to the formation of social groups and social links between people. The social nature of man comes out even in these inimical circumstances – not to speak of all the more everyday situations to do with, say, family life, school, place of work.[4] All these involve social groupings and social relationships, and it is to these facets of life that the sociologist points. In this way he complements the other social sciences – as we shall see, he adds the dimension of *social relations* to the purely economic, psychological, political or geographical.

The second point is that the societies men form involve the interrelationships of many aspects. It is not enough, the sociologists insist, to look just at the economic, or just at the geographical, or political or psychological, or even at the sum made up by all of the separate factors. The actual functioning of society depends on the *interrelationships* of all these – the linking together of these various aspects into society. To see it otherwise, sociologists suggest, is rather like trying to describe a picture by making a list of the different colours that appear in it – without also considering the relationships between the colours and composition of the picture as a whole. Or – to use the analogy of a famous early sociologist – society is something over and above its parts as "the fluidity of water, and its alimentary and other properties are not in the two gases of which it is composed but in the complex substance which they form by their association" (Durkheim 1962, p. xlviii). In the same way, man's needs as a social animal are not satisfied just by the sum of the economic, political, spatial and psychological. He lives in a society which involves the complex linking together of all these dimensions.

---

[1] One of the recommended pre-registration texts.

[2] The word 'society' is used in a number of different senses, sometimes in much the same sense as 'social group', sometimes as something larger scale than this.

[3] The term 'social relationship' is discussed in E. Chinoy, *Society*, New York, Random House, 1970, p. 25 (set book).

[4] For some examples see later (pp. 130–33).

If we ask what is this extra factor in society over and above those studied by other social scientists the answer many sociologists would give would be in terms of *social relationships*. These social relationships can be between people or between institutions (in a sense these are two ways of looking at the same thing). This idea is summed up in a passage in one of our set books when Chinoy writes:

> Society . . . is a totality made up of interrelated and interdependent parts. From one point of view it is a complex structure of groups and individuals held together in a web of social relationships. From another, it is a system of institutions related to and reacting upon one another. (Chinoy, 1970, p. 93.)

This idea of social relationships and of the interrelatedness of society is taken further in the television programme accompanying this unit.

The final point implied in "Man is a social animal" is that societies differ among themselves. This becomes obvious when one looks further at the statement. It is natural for man to live in society. Man – to put it another way – *needs* to live in society. But this need is not for any one particular kind of society. We could argue in principle that there could be many different forms of society which can satisfy this basic need – and this is precisely what we find in practice. This recalls the point made earlier by the psychologists: the fact that man (in broad contrast to animals) is almost infinitely flexible; correspondingly the societies he creates for himself (unlike animal 'societies') are also flexible – they can be of many different kinds. Some may be better than others perhaps; but this basic requirement for man (to live in society) is satisfied by all of them. We have the wandering Bushmen of the Kalahari desert, the city states of classical Greece, the mediaeval warrior kingdoms of Eastern Asia, the village communities of some African peasants, and the complex Muslim emirates of others. All these are societies in which man's basic needs as a social animal are satisfied. *How* man lives in society thus varies – and many of these variations will be the subject of the next section of the course – but *that* they live in societies is a basic axiom of sociology.

These three implications of the statement "Man is a social animal" can be made more meaningful by looking at them in the context of two actual examples. As so often happens, theoretical statements really only come home to us when we see them applied to an actual case on the ground.

The two examples I am going to discuss here are taken from two very different kinds of society. The first, the wandering Bushmen of the Kalahari desert, from many points of view form only a very simple society of the type many describe as 'primitive'. The second is a description of a society *within* a society – a slum area in America. Despite the poverty and ignorance of life in this particular slum ('Cornerville'), it is very definitely located within a literate, highly industrialised, and modern society, that of the United States of America. It thus provides a sharp contrast to the life of the Bushmen. The reason these two highly contrasting societies have been chosen is to illustrate a common theme which runs through the Foundation Course as a whole: that social science (including sociology) does not just treat *one* kind of society (say Britain, or America) but embraces the study of every type of society, wherever and whatever it is.[1] There is a further corollary too. This is that even the most apparently different and remote society may, when studied by a social scientist, have a relevance for understanding our own society better.

2 BUSHMAN SOCIETY

The Bushmen[2] are a particularly interesting case for our purpose here because they live in a semi-desert area where survival is difficult. They are therefore faced in the harshest terms with the problem of meeting the various needs discussed in earlier units: biologically based needs (in particular the need to eat) are clearly pressing; the problems of self-protection and the satisfaction of economic wants are also obvious; and the need to cope with the difficult geographical environment is the central constraint of Bushman life. So the various reasons for people living in society that have been explored in earlier units are all very relevant for Bushman society. But – even in this simplest and harshest of environments – there is something more to Bushman society: it is not *just* a combination of the answers to all these needs. It is also a *society* characterised by the existence of social relationships among its members and by the possession of its own distinctive culture.

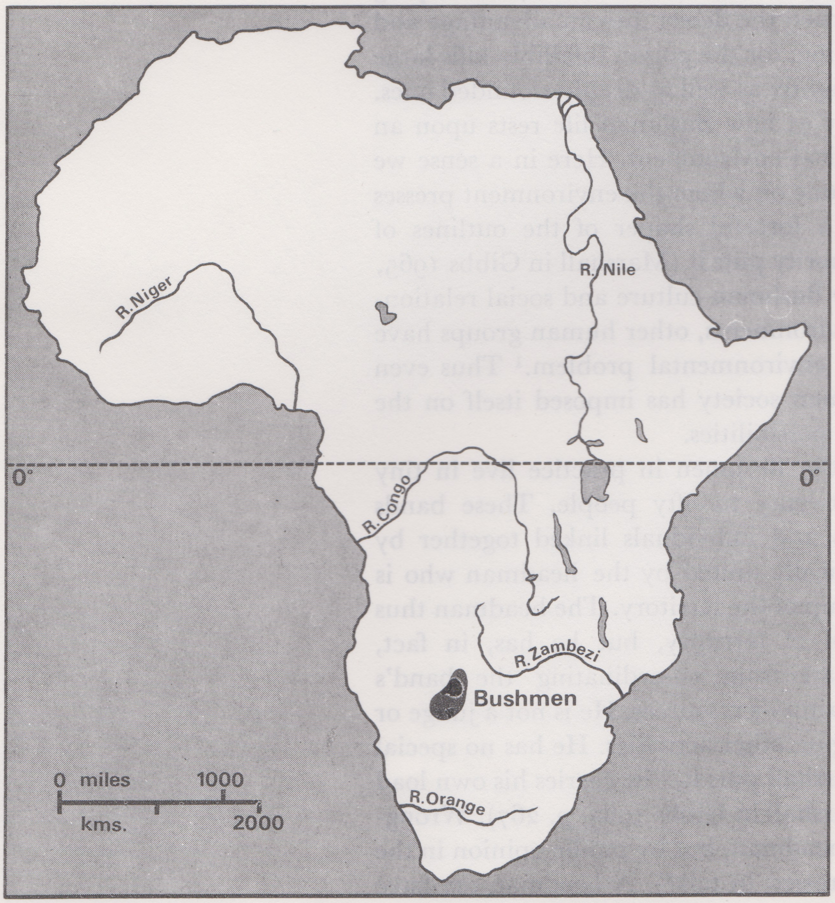


Figure 5.1 Bushmen tribal area.

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[1] For some discussion of some of the usages of the term 'society', see Appendix.

[2] There are a number of different Bushman groupings. The description here applies to the group known as the !Kung Bushmen, who live in the Nyae Nyae region of South West Africa. However, much the same general pattern (differing in detail) applies to most Bushman groups.

More detail is needed here about Bushman life in order to understand this point. Life in the Kalahari is difficult in many ways, above all because of the scarcity of water. Obtaining enough water to live on is a ceaseless labour for the Bushmen and the distribution of water is a major factor in their lives. There are also other difficulties they have to contend with: extremes of temperature; relative scarcity of food; and a very simple technology to help them live in this environment. They have to spend their time mainly in the quest for food. On the other hand, the desert itself, which imposes many of these problems, also offers the means for coping with them and the Bushmen have devised their own particular ways of exploiting these possibilities. The combination of a limited amount of rainfall with a particular type of soil means that the country can provide some vegetation, and there are patches of edible plants to be found throughout the inhabited areas of the desert which the Bushmen exploit. Other things they use are also provided from the environment: materials for shelter, for weapons, and for implements. The desert, what is more, makes the Bushman type of hunting feasible. Tracking is easy in the sand of the Kalahari and the Bushmen exploit this possibility in their method of hunting: they are able to track for days some large animal which they have wounded with one of their poisoned arrows until at last they find it dead. By developing the use of poison they have turned the desert into an advantage and found an effective way of hunting, for the poison infallibly kills large as well as small animals and slightly as well as deeply wounded ones.

We have now looked briefly at how Bushman life rests upon an interaction with the geographical environment. Here in a sense we have geographical man – and one on whom the environment presses very closely. "The desert is a forceful shaper of the outlines of Bushman culture", as one authority puts it (Marshall in Gibbs 1965, p. 245). But it cannot *determine* Bushman culture and social relationships. For in highly similar environments, other human groups have adopted *other* solutions to the environmental problem.[1] Thus even in these desert conditions human society has imposed itself on the environment and exploited its possibilities.

Now in this environment, the Bushmen in practice live in tiny bands, made up of around twenty to fifty people. These bands consist of a group of families and individuals linked together by kinship. They are also symbolically united by the headman who is the focus of the band's ownership of the territory. The headman thus personifies the band's control of territory, but he has, in fact, practically no authority apart from co-ordinating the band's activities in the use of their territory's resources. He is not a judge or commander, nor does he instigate other activities. He has no special privileges either. As Lorna Marshall puts it, "he carries his own load and is as thin as the rest" (Marshall in Gibbs 1965, p. 267). Wrongdoing is not dealt with by the headman, but by public opinion in the band as a whole (usually expressed in talk[2]). A headman *can* have great influence, but this depends on whether or not he possesses the personal qualities to be an effective leader[3] and one whose leadership is accepted by the band as a whole.

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[1] See the discussion of 'possibilism' in Unit 4, pp. 94–95.

[2] For some details on talking, see the account in the accompanying article in the *Reader*, pp. 93–106.

[3] Sometimes the headman lacks these qualities and people may then turn informally to someone else for leadership and advice.

This band is thus the main political unit of Bushman society and is relevant for self-protection and for the exploitation of material sources. A single individual alone could not last long in the Kalahari. But there is more to this group than just security or survival. It is bound together by links of affection, kinship and loyalty.

The social relationships within the band (those of rivalry and hostility as well as those of love or friendship) form the social world within which Bushmen lives are played out. Perhaps a brief episode can bring this home. This comes from the description by Elizabeth Thomas who for a time lived with and studied the Bushmen.

> Once, among !Kung[1] Bushmen we lived with, a woman ran away from her husband to take up with another man. She had considered marrying him, and they ran off one night to his family to live permanently. When her husband found out, he got so wildly angry, taking up his spear and sharpening it, that the headman of the band set off after the elopers to preserve the peace. My brother and I went with him, and at noon we found the lovers resting in the shade.
>
> The headman talked with the elopers and told him how they were bringing shame on both their families, and how the woman's husband was violently upset. By this time the woman had begun to regret her act, and as her children, whom she had brought with her, were crying for their father, she agreed to return. She then explained her reason for leaving; her husband, who had until recently been a serf Bushman, could not hunt well and was not able to clothe her. She was a handsome woman, but her kaross showed that what she said was true – the only garment that she had had to wear on the day of her elopement was tattered and old. She also explained how she and her lover had passed the night, she sleeping on one side of the fire, he on the other, with the children between. She put straws on the ground, a straw for each person, to show how it was, and we believed her.
>
> The whole affair seemed to center itself around raiment, for though the woman was poorly dressed with what her husband had given her, the beads and ornaments that she had made herself were fine and white. Her children, too, were poorly clothed with leather, but they also wore white beads, and her lover, the man who had attracted her so much that she committed an unconscionable act, was dressed beautifully in a soft new leather loincloth, sewed finely and worked with white beads. I myself was adorned with the story, for when we came upon the spot where the lovers were resting I found that I had a pen but no paper and so wrote everything that happened on my arms and legs.
>
> When we got home, the woman's husband took her back and was very glad to have her. No one ever mentioned the affair again. (Thomas 1959, pp. 85–6.)

It is clear from an episode like this that the harsh material conditions of Bushman life have not precluded the development of social relations among them, with all the joys and sorrows, rivalries or affections that this implies.

Now we can move on to look at the economic side. Given this difficult terrain and the political and social bands in which the Bushmen live, how do they manage their economy? They have to have some ways by which to satisfy their material wants and acquire and distribute scarce resources.

Their main wants are obviously food and water. But the Bushmen do not practise agriculture nor the keeping of domestic animals. This means that all their food must come either from hunting or from the various edible plants growing spontaneously in the desert. Among these are berries, fruits and nuts. The difficulty is that the sources of water are often at some distance from the patches of food. During the wet season, it is not so bad. But in the dry months either all the water has to be carried from the water holes to the plant area – and the only containers are ostrich shells – or the plant food back to the water. This is likely to be a matter of miles, perhaps as much as twenty or thirty miles. The work at this time of the year is never-ending.

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[1] The click sounds in the Bushman language which have no equivalent in English are often represented by special symbols, in, for example, !Kung.

This gathering of food is mainly by the women. It is the men's work to hunt. The food that is produced by this hunting in fact plays a relatively small part in the actual food intake of the Bushmen. It is not even the only source of protein. But meat (and its acquisition) plays a part in Bushman life out of all proportion to its actual food value. In other words its social significance markedly exceeds its economic importance. The glory and excitement associated with the hunt, for example, is something more than the material results can explain in themselves. As one observer has written:

> The intense craving for meat, the anxiety that goes with the hunt, the deep excitement of the kill, finally the eating and the satisfaction reach to the very core of the people, engaging powerful emotions. Once a young man, /Qui,[1] who was said to be the best hunter in the region, had been charged by a magnificent cock ostrich on a big open plain where there was no refuge. He knelt, facing the creature, until it was within close range and shot an arrow straight into its heart. Back in the werf, while the meat was being cut up and distributed by /Qui's wife's brothers, he slept exhausted on the mound of black and white plumes and the women – some of the plumes in their hair – danced a dance of praise round him. This is the role of the !Kung hunters. (Marshall in Gibbs 1965, p. 255.)

The actual acquisition of the meat may be dictated by economic or biological wants and needs. But the songs and the excitement and the huge prestige acquired by the hunter – none of them can be explained completely by economic, biological or geographical factors, they are part of man's social nature.[2]

After the game has been killed, an important event follows: the sharing out of the meat. In one way this is obviously an economic act: the distribution of scarce resources. But there is far more to it than mere economic distribution. The details of this can be followed up in Marshall's article (reprinted in the *Reader*, pp. 93–106), but it is interesting just to look at the process briefly here to see how important social relationships (and not just economic activities) are in this process.

The 'owner' of the game is the man who owns the first arrow that has effectively fixed itself in the animal (it is presumed that its poison is the cause of death). But being the 'owner' merely means that he is responsible for making the first distribution of meat. In this, the whole animal is divided amongst just a few people (mainly the small group of hunters themselves). They receive large pieces on the bone. Then the second distribution is made. The hunters divide up their sections into as many pieces as possible and give them to further recipients. This is mainly according to family ties: each hunter gives a piece to his wife's parents (they should be given the best portion of all), to his own parents, wife and children; and perhaps to his

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[1] / also represents a click sound.

[2] The *social* valuation of some economic activity on a scale higher than its purely material importance is not confined to the Bushmen; we will also meet it in the next example (Cornerville youths) and in many others during the course.

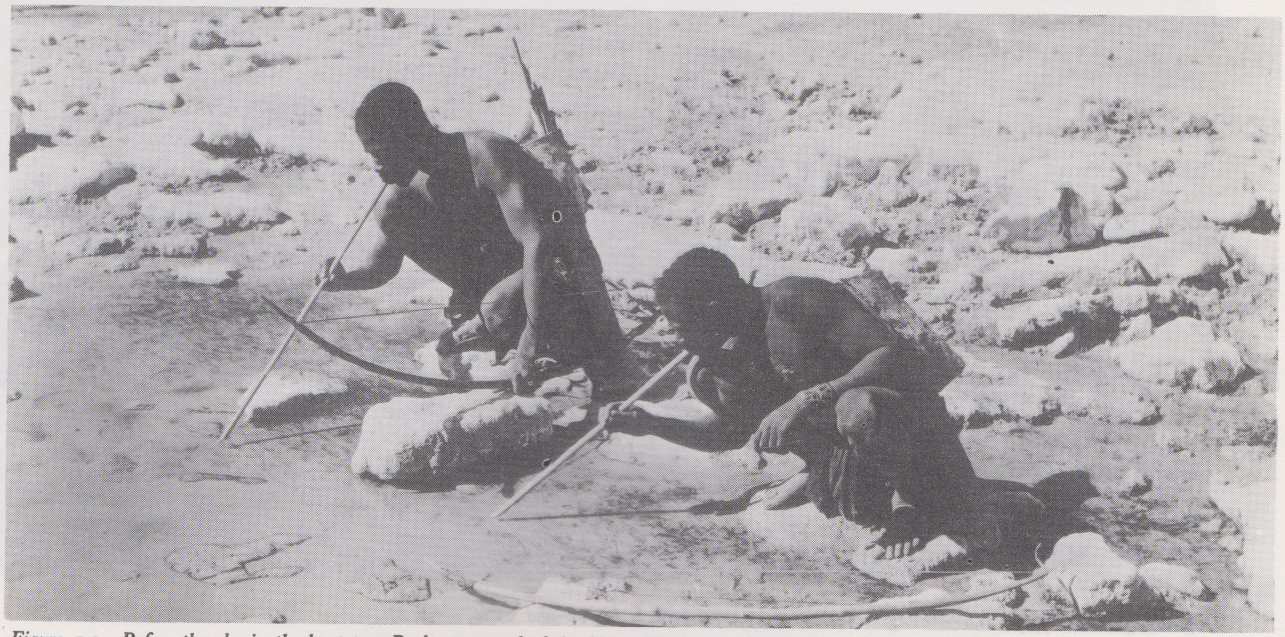

Figure 5.2 Before they begin the hunt two Bushmen quench their thirst. The water is sucked up through a rod which they also use to get access to water lying below the surface of the sand in dry rivers.

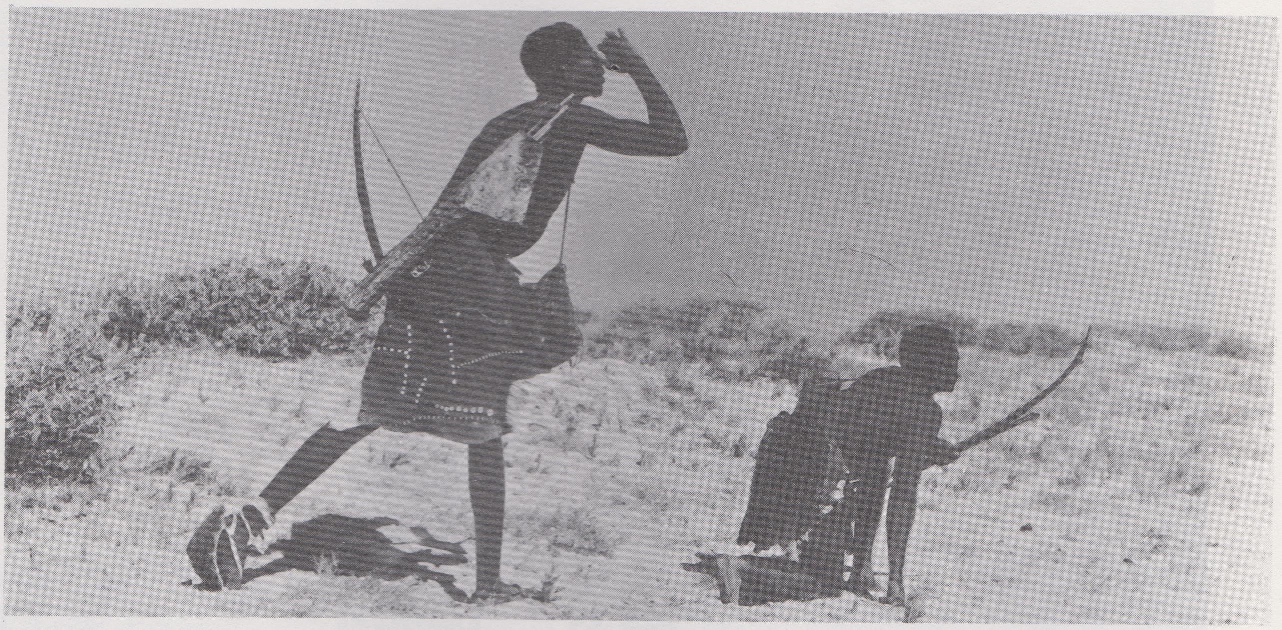

Figure 5.3 Springbok sighted about 300 yards away. Although the vast plains abound in game, the open country makes it difficult to approach within range of a bow and arrow.

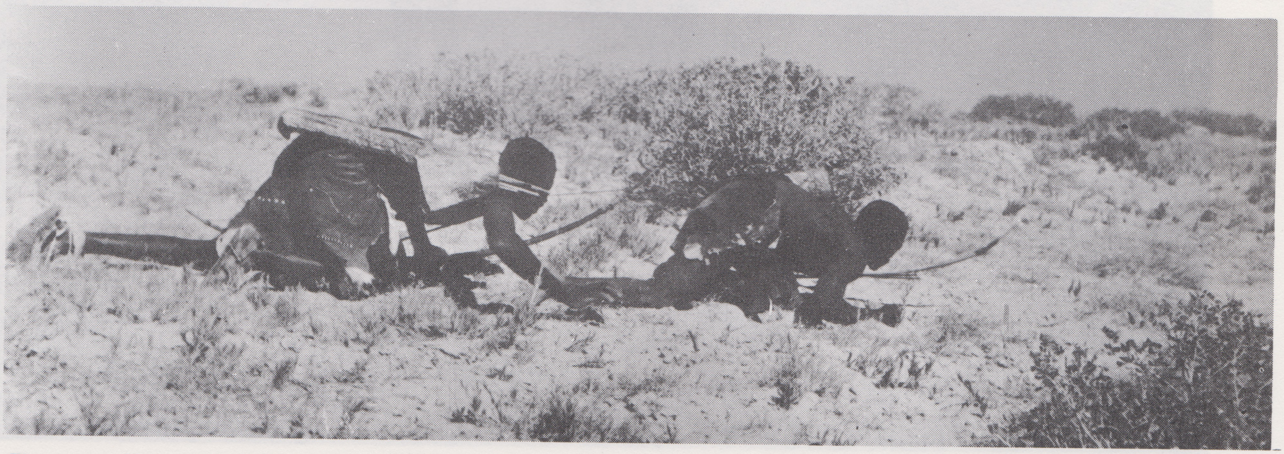

Figure 5.4 Having sighted their quarry, the Bushmen begin to stalk it with amazing skill and cunning, moving cautiously against the wind.

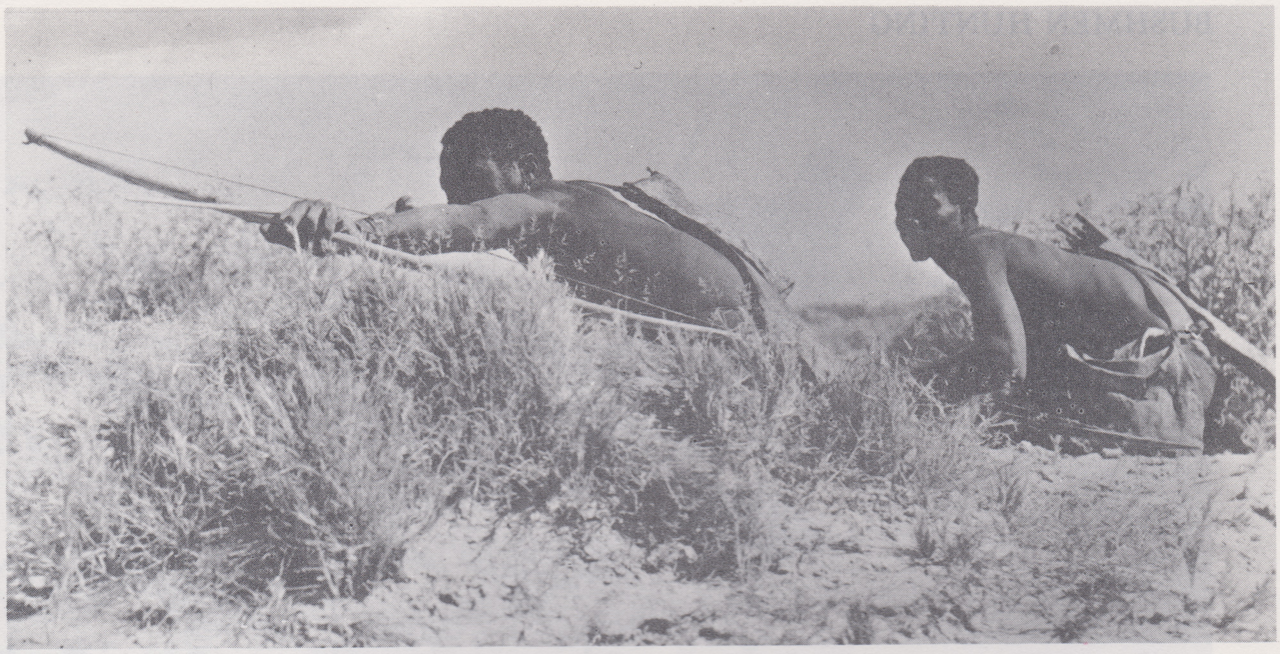

Figure 5.5 With 75 yards separating hunter and quarry, powerful 5 ft. bow and 35 in. arrow are poised for the kill.

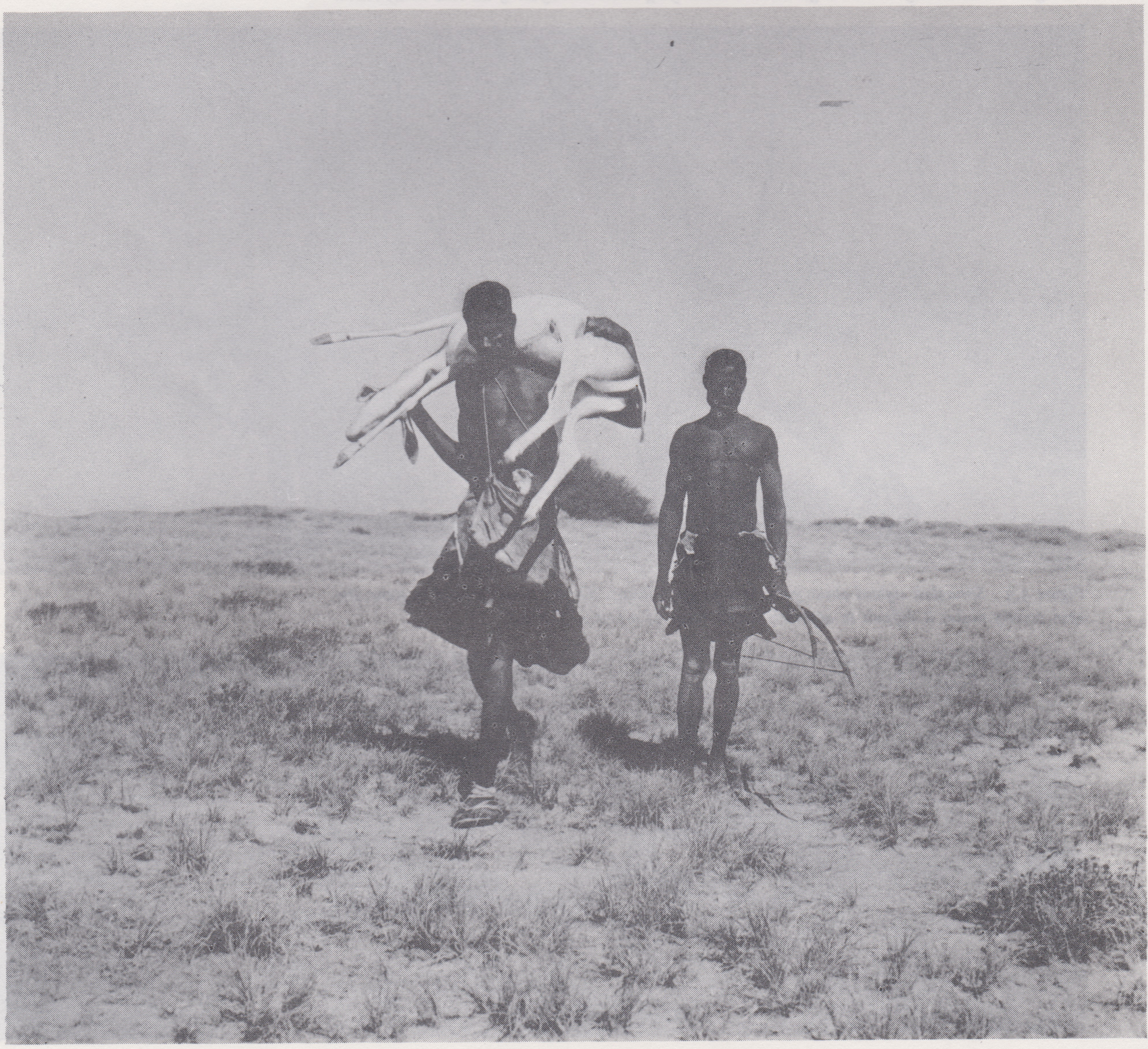

Figure 5.6 The buck is carried to the kraal by the hunter who did not make the kill.

Figure 5.7 A feast is held in the evening.

brothers and sisters and other relations of himself and his wife. After this there is yet a third distribution. Everyone who has received gives again! By this stage at least it is clear that the significance of all this is far more than merely economic. And – what the sociologist is particularly interested in – this giving is part of the social relationships of the group. As Lorna Marshall puts it, people give gifts "to measure up to what is expected of them, to make friendly gestures, to win favour, to repay past favours and obligations and to enmesh others in future obligation" (Marshall in the *Reader*, p. 99), and this web of sharing and giving helps to bind the whole social group together.

Even in something as basic as food, then, there is a *social* as well as environmental and economic aspects. We cannot, furthermore, fully explain what Bushmen do in merely psychological terms. These, and other gifts, are not given just because each individual, *as an individual*, is, say, generous or unselfish. They are given because this is the social custom that *society* prescribes. "To keep meat without sharing is one of the things that just is not done" (Marshall, p. 101 in the *Reader*). In these transactions, we can see very clearly the way man is a social animal.

The same general point also comes out in other aspects of Bushman life. We have already mentioned the bands which form the Bushman community – which are necessary for economic reasons (for survival, hunting, planning material resources) as well as for self-protection. But these bands are something more than just economic or political units. They also provide the whole *social context* and culture within which life for the Bushmen is meaningful and profound. The *social relationships* within the band bind people together in a rich and subtle way and form the social world in which the human dramas are played out which befall people in the Kalahari desert just as they do anywhere in the world.[1]

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[1] Many examples of this can be found in Thomas, 1959.

In Bushman religion and art too we can find the same theme. Much of their religion is to do with the constant motif of Bushman life: survival. But there is more to it than this. The Bushmen believe in a great god who is responsible for sending sickness and death to mankind, but at the same time has given man the power to cure. The medicine men among the Bushmen receive this power, they believe, from God. It is particularly manifested during the dance in which the medicine men go into a trance and, so the Bushmen believe, draw the sickness out of their fellows. This dance is a *social* occasion in which all members of the band participate. It helps to draw together the social group as a whole and to relieve the tensions of individuals and groups.

The Bushmen thus have religious beliefs and activities which are important to them and which are over and above the incessant process of gaining a livelihood. This helps to bring home to us yet again that even in the harsh, near-impossible conditions of the Kalahari desert, even with their simplest of technologies, the Bushmen are still *social* beings, they have a society and a culture. The social conditions, ideas and norms of their society pervade their lives and help to form the social context in which they enact their activities.

The same point comes out in Bushman art and poetry. We might expect them to be preoccupied only with their hand-to-mouth existence. But man – including Bushman – is more than a purely biological animal and has also developed artistic awareness of social and personal relationships.

Like people anywhere the Bushmen express their view of life and comment on the world around them through poetry. One mood song, for instance, expresses the Bushman appreciation of the need for companionship. It is called *Song of the Old Stump* and is about a hunter who gets separated from his companions. As he finds himself alone at dusk he sees a man in the distance. But when he runs towards him, shouting with relief to have a companion to share the night with, he finds only an old stump (Marshall, 1967, p. 35). Another example is a Bushman poem, a lament for a dead friend. The dead man had been a medicine man, one who was supposed to be able to bring rain. But now he is dead and to his friend the place seems desolate and empty; now his 'string is broken'. Even through the crude translation and the absence of the overtones which gave the original performance its meaningfulness, something of the singer's mournfulness and restrained passion come through.

People were those who
Broke for me the string.
  Therefore,
The place became like this to me,
  On account of it,
Because the string was that which broke for me. . . .

The place feels as if it stood open before me,
Because the string has broken for me,
  Therefore
The place does not feel pleasant to me,
  On account of it. (Bleek & Lloyd 1911, p. 237)

We can see how even in poetic forms the Bushmen are themselves aware of the significance of friendship and companionship – of human relations, in short.

Two main points emerge from this description. First, Bushman society is more than just the sum of psychological, economic, political and geographical factors. It is also a *society*. In other words even in these most difficult and simple conditions, the Bushmen have created social groups in which social relationships and socially transmitted ideas inform their lives. It is this aspect that sociologists are particularly interested in – the social relationships, social groups and the culture within which they function. They emphasise a *social* model of man rather than the psychological, economic, political or geographical models of man implied in other disciplines.

The second point is that Bushman society is made up of a *combination* of different aspects. We have mentioned particularly the economic, psychological and geographical. To understand Bushman life one needs to say something about *all* these dimensions. They all work together to make up Bushman society. Further, in all societies, but perhaps most noticeably in a simple and small-scale society like that of the Bushmen, none of these dimensions can be understood in isolation from each other and from the social context as a whole. Economic transactions, for instance, are mixed up with social relationships (as we saw with Bushman meat distribution). Political authority is not clearly separate from family and friendship relations (as in the position of the leader of a Bushman band). Religious and psychological processes must be looked at together. Bushman society is thus a synthesis of all these dimensions, none of which really makes sense on its own.

3 STREET CORNER SOCIETY

The same points also emerge from studies sociologists have made of other societies. It is not only in so-called 'simple'[1] societies like that of the Bushmen that sociologists can point to the significance of social relationships within social groups, to the culture that informs these and to the synthesis of the various aspects that make up society.

It is possible to make the same kind of analysis of a much larger and more technologically developed society. Take Great Britain, for instance. Here too we can see the fundamental characteristic of man: his propensity to create social relationships and social groups. It is these social groups of various kinds that sociologists of British society study – whether rural communities, large towns, or the smaller units like factories, schools or housing estates and the social groups within them.[2] Sociologists look for the social patterns and social relationships both within and between such groups. They also point to the way the different dimensions of life in Britain – the economic, political, and so on – interpenetrate and influence each other. Thus sociologists studying, say, political alignments find they also have to take people's economic and geographical position into account; the work people do, their economic standard of living and where they live tends to have some relationship (a complex one) to the way they vote. In British, as well as in Bushman, society the sociologist stresses that it is unrealistic to try to isolate just one aspect, one must be aware of the complex interrelationships of all these aspects which make up the society.

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[1] The term 'simple' is often used of non-industrial societies. This can be rather misleading as a general description, however, as many of them are not simple at all, or are so in some respects only and not in others (e.g. simple in technology but not in family organisation). The Bushman society discussed here is obviously simple in terms of its size, technology and division of labour, but *not* in its gift-giving system. 'Simple' is thus a description to use with care—hence my use of inverted commas here.

[2] For a general survey of studies of British communities (rural and urban) see R. Frankenberg, *Communities in Britain: Social Life in Town and Country*, Penguin, 1965 (one of the optional pre-registration texts).

But British society as a whole is rather a large-scale canvas to try to survey. It seems more satisfactory at this point to take a smaller-scale instance for our second example. This is based on W. F. Whyte's famous study of a slum district in America, a book which has become a sociological classic (Whyte 1969, 1st edition 1943). Whyte's own account (of which selections are given in the *Reader*) is what matters. Here only a few points will be made relating his writing to the general topic of this unit.

The people of 'Cornerville' (as Whyte calls it) live[1] in a slum district in an American city inhabited mainly by Italian immigrants and their children.[2] The younger generation (American born) have built up their own society more or less independent of their elders. There are two main divisions: 'college boys', who have achieved higher education and are moving up socially, and 'corner boys', the great majority of young men. These 'corner boys' form groups who hang around particular street corners with their adjoining shops and clubrooms. They tend to have little education and only irregular employment (if that). A large part of Whyte's study (and the part I shall concentrate on here) concerns these 'corner boys' and their gangs.

Now at first sight this might seem an unlikely place to look to exemplify our axiom "man is a social animal". These gangs are made up of little-educated youths, young men brought up in slums and without regular income, the despair of the social workers who come from outside. The economic and geographical constraints of their lives (their poverty and their slum surroundings) might make one expect a rather limited type of social interaction. Similarly the surroundings and social background in which they had been brought up make it extremely difficult for them to have any direct political power in the wider community. Now, all these factors are relevant up to a point. But none of them has prevented the creation of social groups and relationships among the 'corner boys'. In fact, Whyte makes two main points in this book. One is that the 'corner boys' have in a sense created a kind of little society on its own; each gang has its own leader, its own network of rights and obligations. The structure of the social group is based on the social interaction of its members. To these members this is their social world – and a very real one. The second point is that the overall social structure of Cornerville is made up of a number of elements, one of which is the corner gang. There are also the college boys' associations, the racket and police systems, and the political organisation. The social functioning of Cornerville consists, in Whyte's book, precisely of these relationships.

When we look at the corner gang itself, it becomes clear that in several aspects it parallels the constitution of a Bushman band. As is made clear in the extract by Whyte given in the *Reader*, there is a political aspect to the life of the gang. It has a definite leader (in the gang Whyte mainly described he is called Doc). This leader is not a formal commander or official with an officially prescribed position, but his rôle in the gang is nevertheless clearly recognised by all its members – it is more definite in fact than the personal leadership involved in a Bushman band. Doc's position is partly supported by his past fighting reputation and his skill in argument, but essentially it depends on the fact that he is accepted as the leader by all the members and that they are bound to him by a series of mutual obligations. As Whyte puts it, "The members do not feel that the gang is really gathered until the leader appears. They recognise an obligation to wait for him before beginning any group activity, and when he is present they expect him to make their decisions" (Whyte 1969, p. 91, in the *Reader*). The unity of the gang also depends on the leader as "the focal point for the organization of the group" (loc. cit.) backed up by the system of mutual obligations, favours and gifts between members of the gang. We can thus see a definite political dimension to the corner gang in terms of leadership, decision-making and cohesion.

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[1] Here and elsewhere it is convenient to follow one common sociologists' convention, that of using the present tense even when the position may have changed by the time of writing. The sociological validity of the original survey is not invalidated by later changes.

[2] The city is in fact Boston. Whyte used a pseudonym on publication to conceal the identities of the individuals concerned.

This political side is closely tied up with psychological questions. In one section of his book (not included in the extract in the *Reader*) Whyte describes how positions of both leader and follower are related to their personalities. Both Doc and Long John (another member of the gang) experience personal difficulties – Doc's dizzy spells and Long John's nightmares – which Whyte connects with their rôles in the social network of the gang at the time concerned. In Doc's case his dizzy spells come on him when he is unemployed and thus has no money to keep up his obligations as gang leader. "Since he had held the leading position among his corner boys, there was an unavoidable conflict between the behaviour necessitated by his penniless condition" (Whyte, 1969, p. 268). One needs therefore to look at social relations within the group to understand the individual's adjustment to his society.

The economic working of Cornerville gangs is once again related to other aspects and in particular to the political aspect and to social relationships within the group generally. Here the example already referred to can illustrate this. One of the bonds that link the corner boys together both to one another and to their leader is the use of money. Whyte describes (the *Reader*, pp. 90–91) how gang members constantly spend money on each other. There is obviously far more to this than a purely economic exchange – it is part of the "system of mutual obligations which is fundamental to group cohesion" (the *Reader*, p. 90). This also applies to the system of ranking and prestige within the group, which matches the pattern of spending on other members, and, above all, to the way the leader uses his money. The leader must spend more money on those of low status than they do on him. This means, as Whyte puts it, that "financial relations must be explained in social terms" (the *Reader*, p. 91).

Like the Bushmen, then, gangs in Cornerville can be analysed as miniature societies. In each case one can point to economic, political and psychological aspects, and the spatial context in which they exist. But each of the aspects is also linked to the others, and in any one case it is impossible to understand it fully in isolation. Not only are all these aspects tied up with each other, but the extra dimension of social relationships also comes into all of them.

The description in *Street Corner Society* brings home to us once again that people live in a social context. The cliques and obligations of

Doc and his corner boys; the rivalries and quarrels; the patterns of leadership and competition – all these form the social relationships and lead to the social groupings which are an essential part of human life. As one description of Whyte's book puts it: "Conversations and chatty accounts of club meetings and bowling matches more than colour the picture; they *are* the picture for they show in action the relations which Whyte analyzes."

Thus it becomes evident that even the slum boys of an American city form their own society. Their life, like that of the Bushmen, is marked by social relationships and the existence of social groupings.

There are, of course, differences. Cornerville youths are part of a large-scale and highly differentiated society, Bushman bands are relatively (though not completely) autonomous and homogeneous. There are difficulties too about regarding each (especially the corner gang) as in every sense a 'society' and there are also extra dimensions to each (like the family, religion, social stratification or social change) which there is not time to pursue here.[1] But the underlying patterns are the same. In each the different dimensions of society influence each other. In each, the web of social relationships helps to form the 'glue', as it were, which holds the society together. Whether in the Kalahari or in Cornerville, man is a social animal.

4 CONCLUSION

Even the two main examples described so far will have shown something of the diversity of ways in which man can be a social animal – that is of the societies he forms for himself. Unlike animals, man is flexible and can create many *different* types of society, all equally social. On the one hand we have the wandering Bushmen of the desert, non-literate, nearly naked, with the simplest of technologies; on the other, people of a rich industrial nation with a tradition of written learning and highly developed technology – people of a slum area, it is true, but nevertheless of a very different social and cultural milieu from that of the Bushmen. Yet at root they have something in common. Both Bushmen and Cornerville youths form a society, one with its own rules and relationships and culture. In each, man shows himself as a social animal.

If two such very different groups can have this basic similarity in common it is obvious that this may well be so in other societies also. Indeed the same kind of point has been made by sociologists of societies all over the world. Whether in town or country, East or West, Africa or Europe, man forms social bonds with his fellows. This happens even in circumstances which at first sight make close social links seem unlikely. In prison, for instance, one might expect that the chasm between warders and prisoners would preclude the possibility of real social relationships. Yet, as has been shown in a well-known sociological study of an American prison (Sykes 1958, especially Chapter 3), in fact there may be close relations between the prisoners and the guards. The guards are involved in a system of reciprocal obligations with the prisoners, in which prisoners as well as guards do favours for each other. In practice, Sykes shows, "the custodians are led into a *modus vivendi* with their captives which bears little resemblance to the stereotypical picture of guards and their prisoners" (Ibid., p. 58). Thus, even in prison, people can in a sense create their own little society, marked by socially accepted customs and social relationships not only among the prisoners themselves but even between prisoners and guards.

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[1] Some of these are discussed later in the course.

IN PRISONS TOO, PEOPLE FORM SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

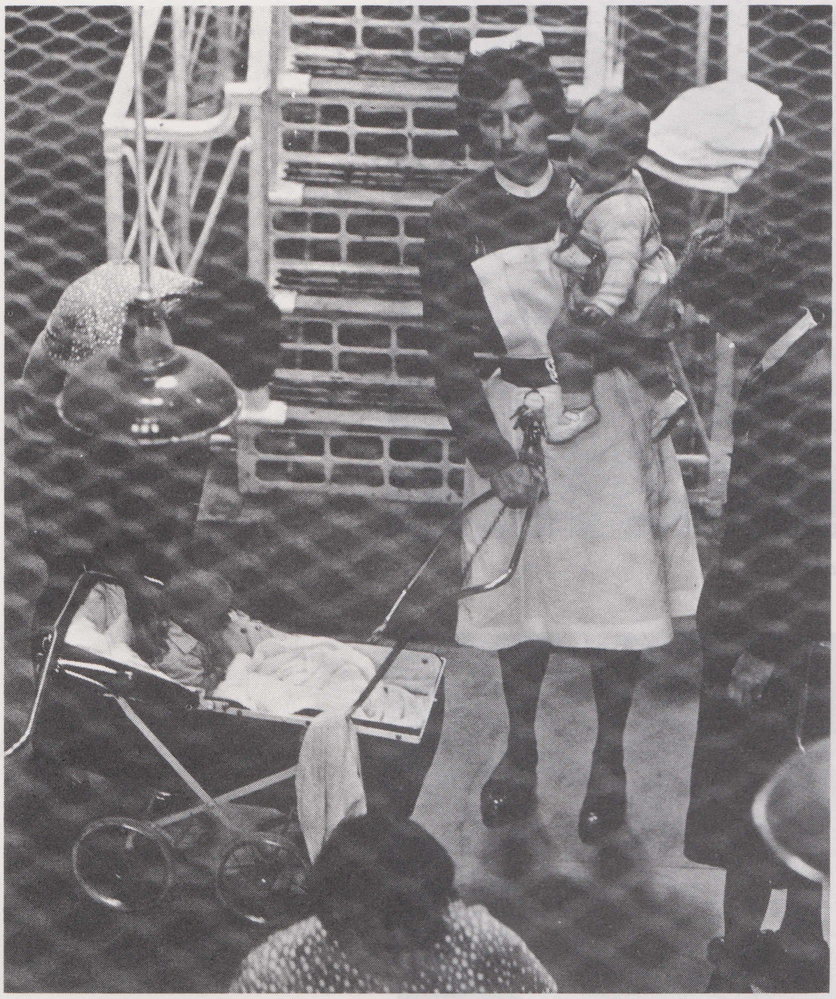

Figure 5.8 Mothers and Children in prison. *Photograph by Ray Green*

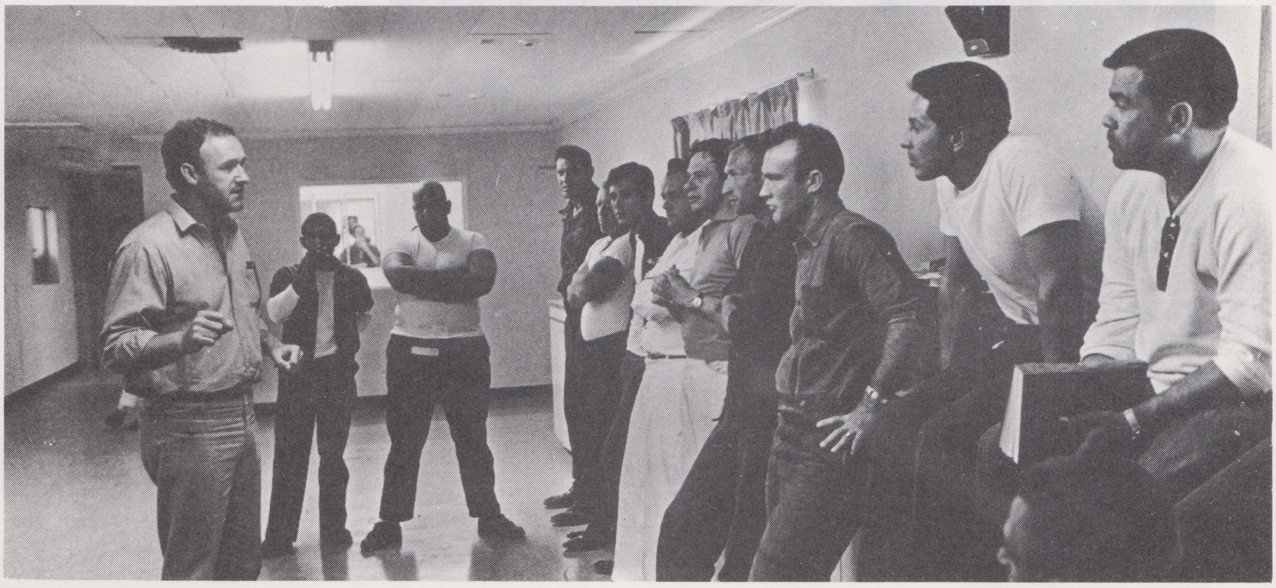

Figure 5.9 Convicts in Arizona State Penitentiary. *Photograph by Lawrence Schiller*

WORKERS ARE INVOLVED IN SOCIAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS

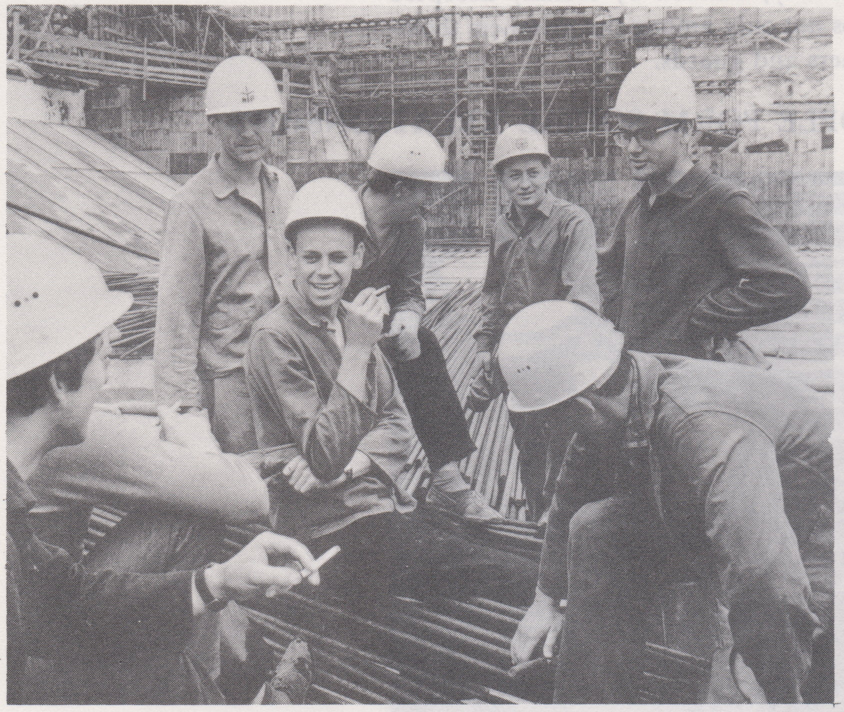

Figure 5.10 Berlin – students help in reconstruction. *Photograph by Ray Green.*

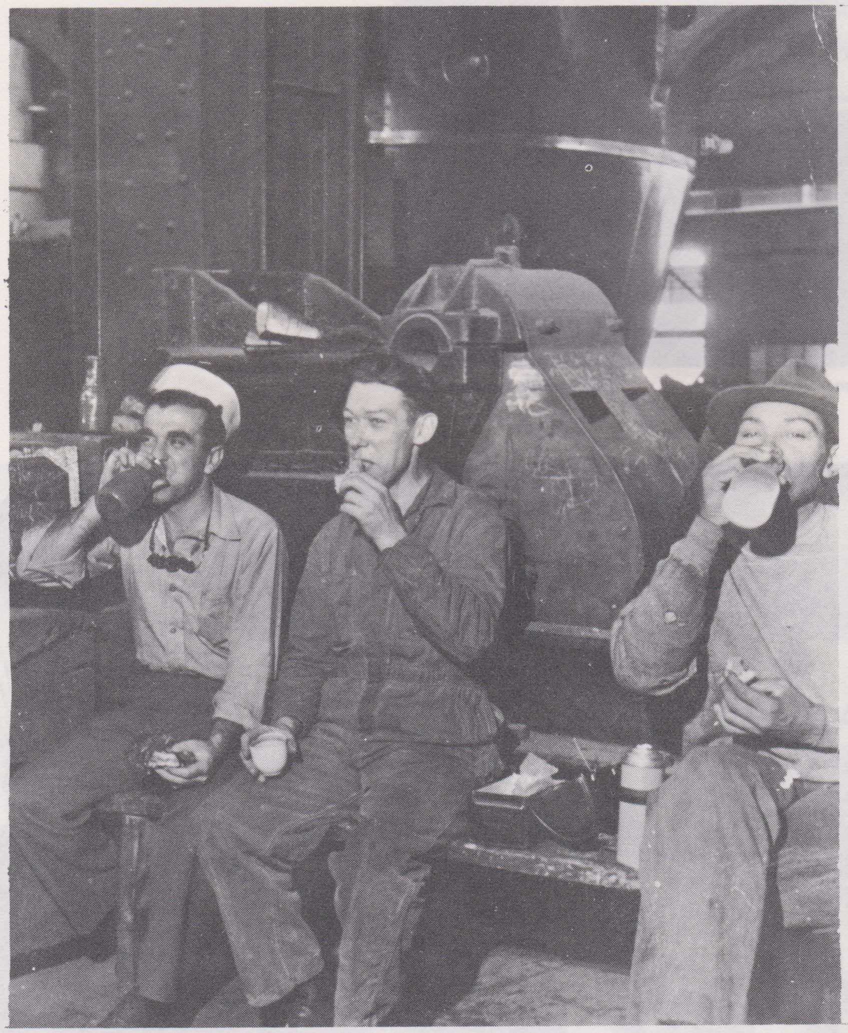

Figure 5.11 Scandinavian Railway Workers at lunch.

The same – perhaps even more surprisingly – is true of mental hospitals. Here too the inmates can find ways to form social links and social groups.[1] Among the patients in one hospital, for instance, there are various cliques, sub-groups and patron-client relationships (the latter also comprising the staff), and their dealings are marked by social as well as economic exchanges. Goffman insists that a mental hospital therefore can be regarded as a community. "The system of dealings that patients have with one another . . . provides one example of human association, to be avoided, no doubt, but also to be filed by the student – along with all the other examples of association that he can collect" (Goffman 1968, p. 266). Even in mental hospitals, then, people inhabit a "continuously meaningful social world" (Ibid., p. 121).[2]

The same applies to people's activities in the different dimensions of society that we have discussed. It might seem, for instance, that the economic sphere is independent and self-sufficient. But we have seen from both Cornerville and Bushman bands that economic exchange is intertwined with social relationships. The same is true in economic production also. Workers in all kinds of economic activities (from a factory or an office to a farming group or hunting band) are involved in social as well as economic relations.[3]

Political life too involves more than just narrowly 'political' activities. It is intimately tied up with socially defined group and social relationships[4].

The social groups we have been looking at so far have been small ones, societies in miniature as it were. Relationships in a Bushman band or Cornerville gang as well as in many prisons, hospitals or factories, tend to be face-to-face ones, of an intimate and personal kind. We have started with these smaller groups, partly because of their intrinsic interest, partly because some of the basic patterns are easier to see when one looks at these small-scale social systems. But similar patterns can be traced in societies of all kinds. In fact, looking at these small-scale systems throws light on larger societies. In a village or town or metropolis too we can look for the interlinking network of social relationships which helps to give cohesion and meaning to the community as a whole. It is true that as we move up the scale of size, there are certain differences to notice, especially the fact that relationships cannot all be on a face-to-face basis, but must sometimes be more indirect. But a network of social relationships can still be traced, even if not everyone is any more linked *directly* to everyone else. The same with the intertwining of the different dimensions of society. Again, there may be some differences in larger societies. Some authorities at least would argue that in large-scale urbanised and technologically developed societies the different dimensions (the economic or the political sphere, for instance) are more clearly differentiated or separable from each other. But even in these cases there is still the same basic pattern of the mutual influence of each of these dimensions on each other. Some of these larger societies will be coming into later units of the course and a case study set in the context of British society will also enter into the television programme which accompanies this unit. In all of these we find the same basic pattern of social relationships and groupings, the same overlapping of the different dimensions of society. The details may differ. But the basic point is constant: man is a social animal and is necessarily involved in the complex relationships that constitute society.[1]

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[1] See the interesting discussion of this in E. Goffman, *Asylums*, Penguin, 1968 (one of the optional pre-registration texts), particularly the section on "The underlife of a public institution: a study of ways of making out in a mental hospital" (especially pp. 244 ff.).

[2] For an example of how people can form a social system even in something as heterogeneous as a queue, see the extract by Mann in Chapter 26 of the *Reader*.

[3] This is a point that will be elaborated in Unit 13 (on the sociology of economic behaviour).

[4] This point is further explored in Unit 28 (politics in groups).

The diversity of ways in which man can be social leads us on to the next portion of the course. We have so far looked at various answers (or attempts to answer) the sometimes confusing question of why people live in society. Finally we have come to the one sociologists consider most fundamental of all: people live in society because it is natural for them to do so, they have no alternative. From this – and now taking this for granted – we can pass on to the question of *how* people live in societies. There are countless diverse ways of doing this and the next twenty-six units will illustrate some of these ways. At the same time it will become clear that, despite the diversity, there are also underlying similarities. Thus, the next section of the course will be concerned to illustrate both the wide diversity and some of the underlying regularities of the way people live in society. One of the points that will come out during this is that each society (including our own) tends to assume that its *own* particular form is the right and the best one. The Bushmen would probably despise and misunderstand the Cornerville youths just as those young men would despise the Bushmen. Each judges in terms of his *own* culture. As we have seen in the radio programmes, the social scientist has to try to stand outside these conflicts and commitments and analyse them all dispassionately. He has constantly to remind us that 'different' does not necessarily mean 'worse' or 'better'. It is his job to analyse what *is* not to judge what *ought* to be.

In this unit, we have looked at the question of 'Why do men live in society?' from the point of view of the sociologist. The basic answer he gives, 'because man is a social animal', has led us into a discussion of what this implies and the particular contribution of the sociologist to throwing light on this. The two main points that emerged were, first, the sociologist's interest in the significance of social relationships in linking people and groups, and, second, his stress on the way the different dimensions of society are constantly interrelated with one another. In this second concern, he touches on

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[1] As so often happens, some of the material in the preceding section touches on various controversies and problems. In particular there are disagreements about what should be considered the *central* focus of sociology: some say social relations, others social groups, others social systems, others again culture and so on. Though there are some real differences of focus here, some of the disagreement is in fact merely terminological and depends on adopting one or the other of several different technical definitions (I have not entered into this sphere in the present unit, and have been using the central concepts in a fairly general sense). At any rate very few sociologists would deny that social relationships and social groups form at least one major part of the sociologist's concern. For some further discussion of some of the controversies involved see e.g. D. H. Wrong, 'The over-socialized conception of Man', *American Sociological Review* 26, 1961 (reprinted in A. Inkeles (ed.), *Readings on Modern Sociology*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966); E. Chinoy, *Society* (set text), Chapter 2; A. Inkeles, *What is Sociology?*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965, Chapter 1, especially pp. 14 ff.

"THERE ARE MANY SURFACE DIFFERENCES IN CULTURES, BUT PEOPLE EVERYWHERE TEND TO SHOW MANY OF THE SAME BASIC PATTERNS OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS."

1 "The recognition of a social relationship through greeting".

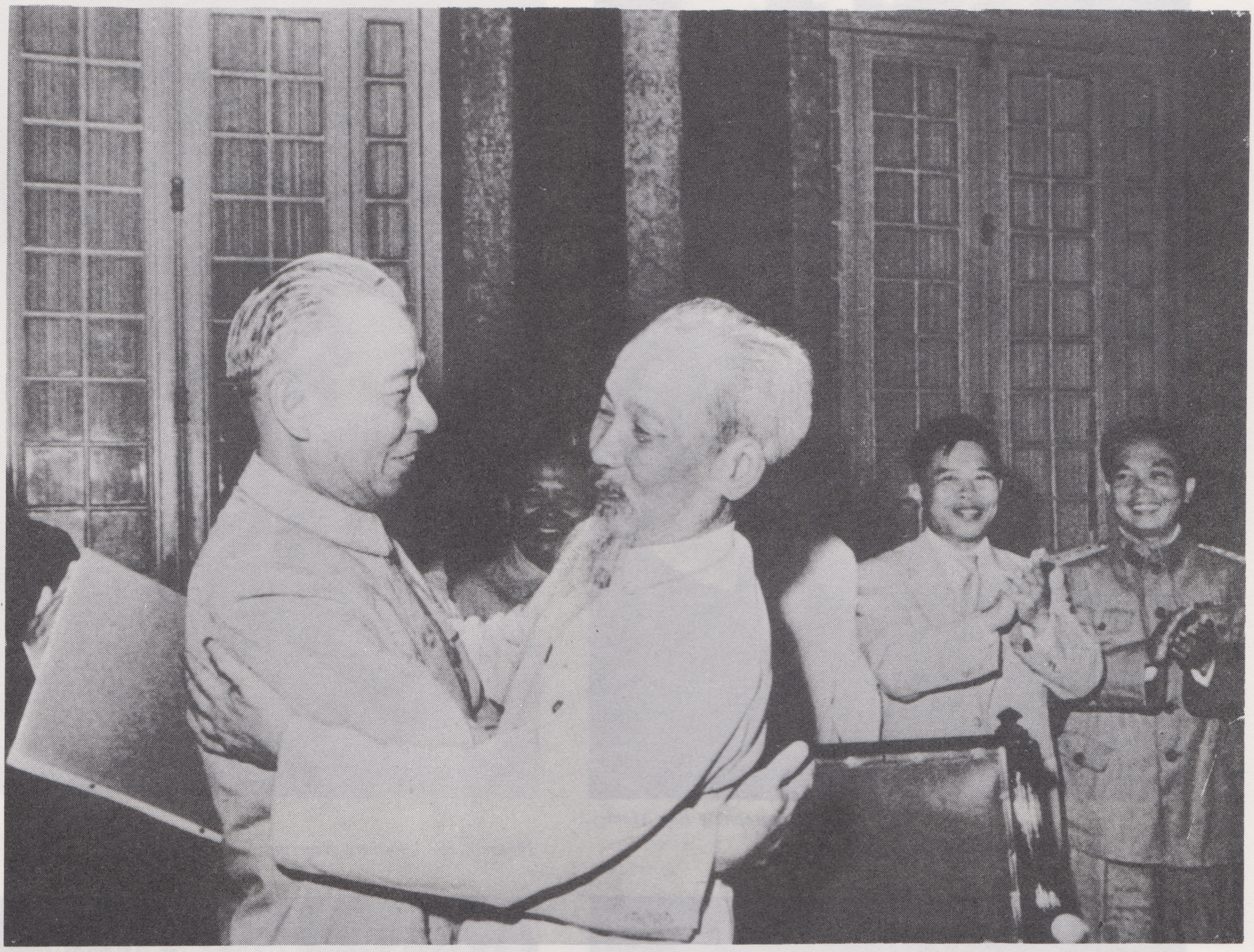


Figure 5.12 South-East Asia. *Photograph by Ray Green.*

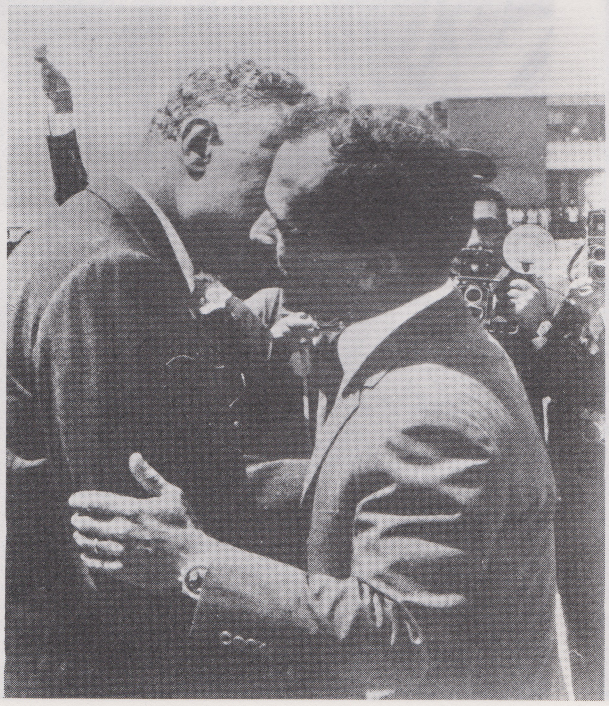


Figure 5.13 Arab.

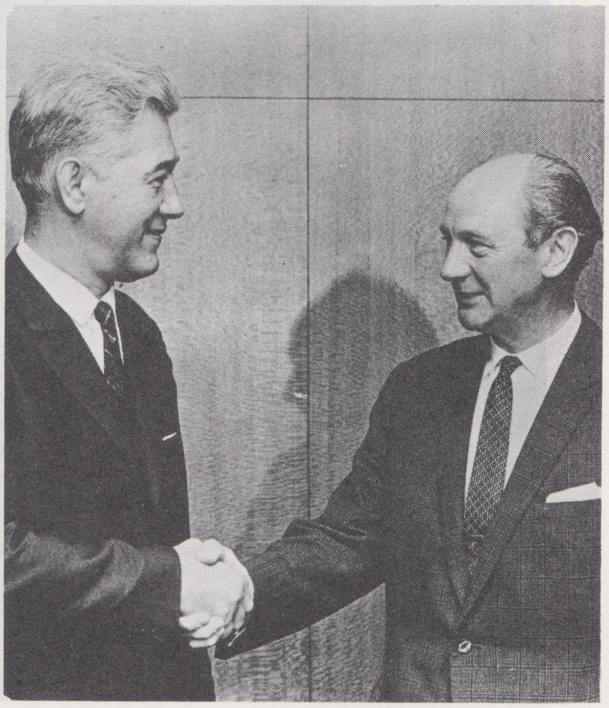
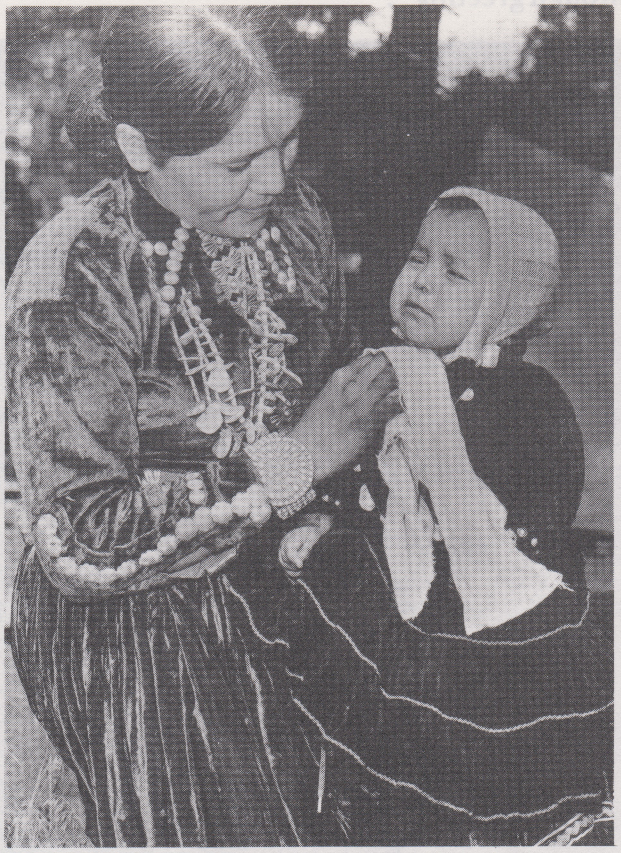


Figure 5.14 British. *Photograph by Ray Green.*

2 "The social relationship of mother and child".



Photograph by Ray Manley.

Figure 5.15 *Navajo (North American Indian).*

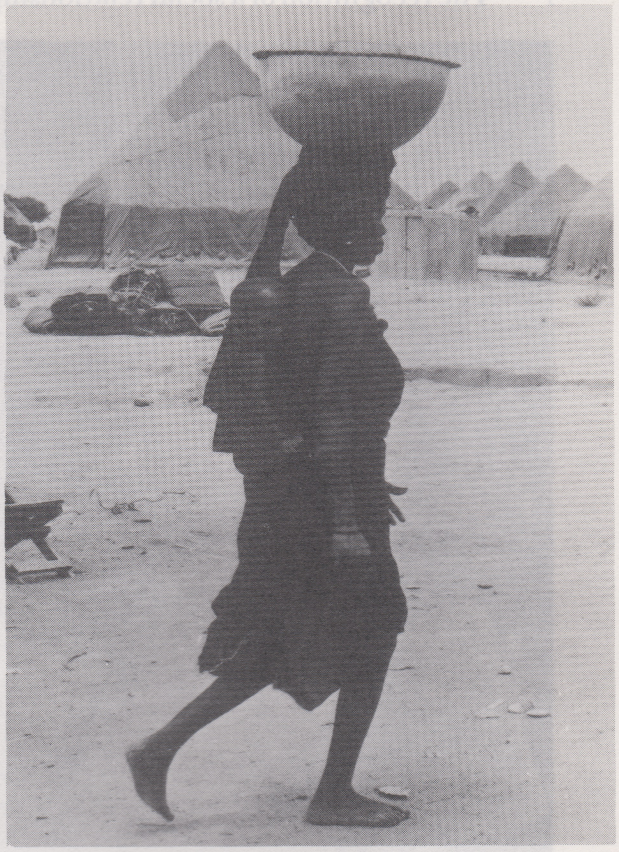
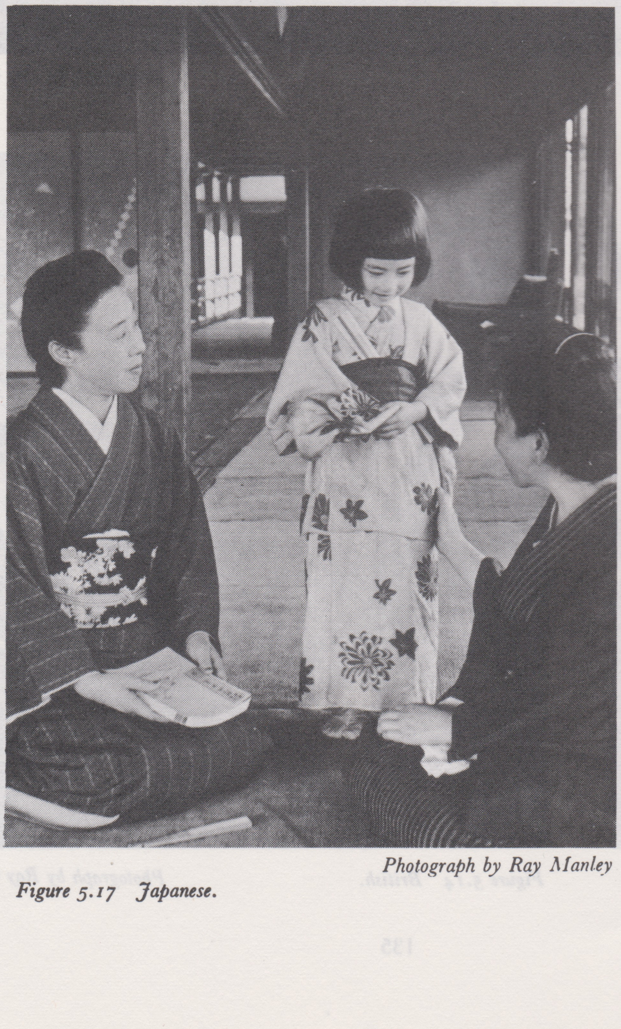
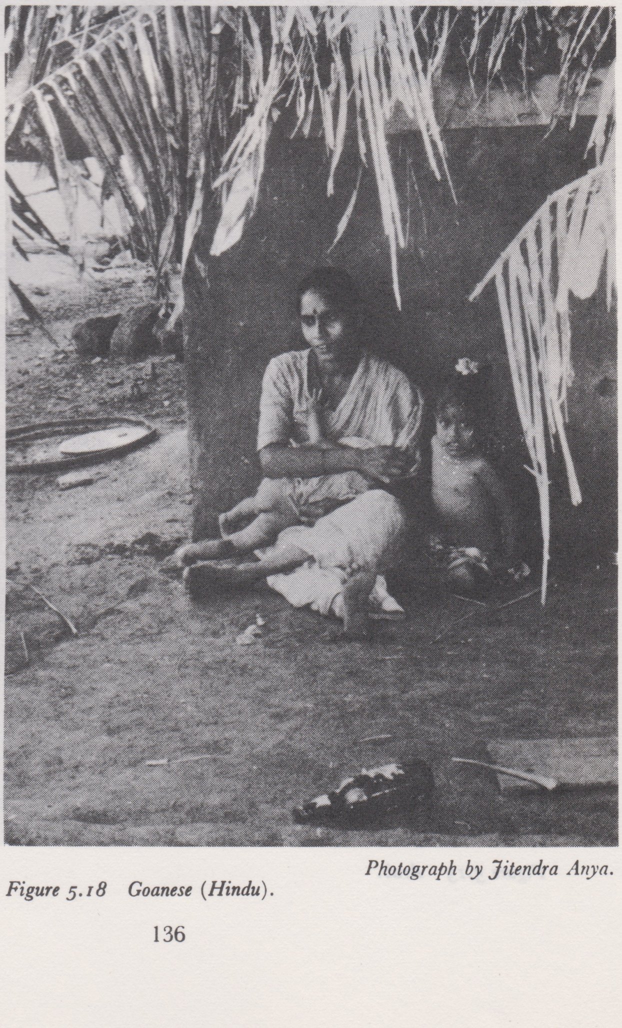


Figure 5.16 *Northern Nigerian*



Photograph by Ray Manley

Figure 5.17 *Japanese.*



Photograph by Jitendra Anya.

Figure 5.18 *Goanese (Hindu).*

Figure 5.19 British. *Photograph by G. Newman.*

the findings of all the social scientists (economists, psychologists, political scientists, and human geographers) and in a sense can claim to integrate them all, since he points to the way all these specialist dimensions fit into the whole that he himself studies: society. However, that man is basically a social animal is in fact something that tends to be taken for granted by *all* social scientists, even if the sociologists often state it most forcibly.[1]

The answers given by the various disciplines to the 'why?' questions in this section of the course have helped us understand something of the foundations of each discipline and of the approach of social science in general. But these can only take us a certain way. To take us further into understanding society, we now need to look at *how* people live in society – the diverse (and yet in some ways similar) ways in which, throughout the world, man is a social animal and lives in societies.

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[1] It may be, however, that different disciplines take it for granted in different ways. This is something worth looking out for in the units that follow.

APPENDIX

As with so many other central terms, there is no exact agreement on the precise meaning of the term 'society'. Some discussion of this is given in one passage (Chinoy 1970: 24–6). However since the term has inevitably been used in a number of different senses in the first five units of this course, for quick reference here it may be helpful to distinguish three main senses in which the word appears:

1 Society as a very generalised and abstract term, really amounting to little more than "the human way of life" or "the social aspect of mankind". E.g. "Man lives in Society" is sometimes used in Unit 5 to mean, more or less, just that man is a human being, rather than that he lives in any *specific* society (in sense 2 below).

2 Society as a more concrete and specific term. Many different societies exist in this sense, e.g. we speak of British society, Japanese society, Bushman society.

3 Society in the sense of social group. This shades into sense 2 above, but tends to refer to smaller units, e.g. a group of prisoners, fellow members of a club, a street corner gang. Not all social scientists would use the term in this sense, but some do or do at times.

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D100 – UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY: A FOUNDATION COURSE

1 WHY PEOPLE LIVE IN SOCIETIES

1 The Fundamentals of Human Nature
2 Men and Government
3 The Economic Basis of Society
4 Societies and Environments
5 Man as a Social Animal

2 HOW PEOPLE LIVE IN SOCIETIES

Socialisation

6 Child Socialisation
7 Personality Development
8 Attitudes and Prejudice
9 The Family and its Functions

Economy and Society

10 Economic Wants
11 Production and Supply
12 Markets and Prices
13 The Sociology of Economic Behaviour

Money, Wealth and Class

14 The Workings of the Economy
15 Money
16 Distribution of Incomes
17 Social Stratification
18 The Psychology of Social Class

Spatial Aspects of Society

19 Rural Land Use
20 Location of Industry
21 Zoning within Cities
22 The Size and Spacing of Settlements
23 Approaches to Political Geography

Government and Politics

24 The Formal Structure of Government
25 Informal Political Institutions
26 Government and Politics without the State
27 (1) Political Culture (2) Politics and Political Systems
28 Politics in Groups

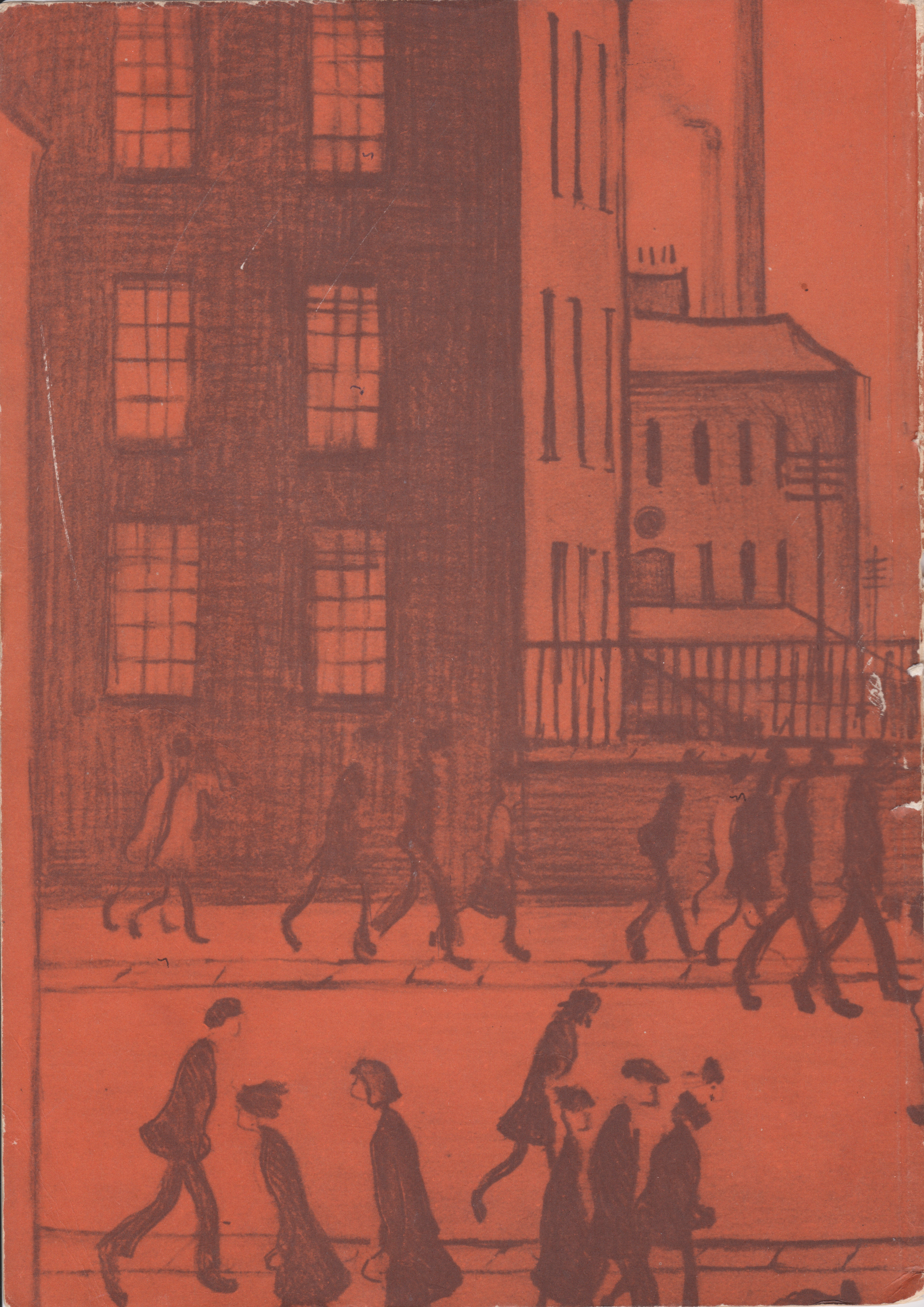
Stability Change and Conflict

29 Stability and Function in Society
30 Social Change in Society
31 Stability and Change in Social Groups

3 WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS PEOPLE FACE IN SOCIETIES

The Population Explosion – an Interdisciplinary Approach

32 The Demographer and his World
33 Demographic Regions of the Indian Sub-Continent
34 Economic Implications of Rapid Population Growth
35 The Social and Political Implications of Rapid Population Growth
36 Diffusion and Acceptance of Change



D100 1–5 Why People Live in Societies